DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 465 005 UD 035 053

AUTHOR	Cunningham, Elizabeth Kolb, Ed.; Thompson, Charles L., Ed.
TITLE	A Goal for North Carolina's Schools. First in America 2001 Progress Report.
INSTITUTION	North Carolina Education Research Council, Chapel Hill.
PUB DATE	2002-01-00
NOTE	87p.; For the 2001 Special Report, see UD 035 051. For the 2000 Progress Report, see UD 035 052. Cover page varies.
AVAILABLE FROM	First in America, North Carolina Education Research Council, P.O. Box 2688, Chapel Hill, NC 27515-2688. Tel: 919-843-8127; e-mail: fia@northcarolina.edu; Web site: http://www.firstinamerica.northcarolina.edu.
PUB TYPE	Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Achievement; Administrator Role; *Educational Environment; Educational Finance; *Educational Quality; Elementary Secondary Education; Family School Relationship; Health Promotion; *School Community Relationship; *School Readiness; School Safety; *Teacher Competencies
IDENTIFIERS	Access to Health Care; Administrator Competencies; *North Carolina

ABSTRACT

This second annual report details North Carolina's performance and progress since 2000 in the five goal areas: high student performance; every child ready to learn; safe, orderly, and caring schools; quality teachers and administrators; and strong family, business, and community support. Over the years, North Carolina's education system has continued a steady climb that made the state number one in educational progress during the 1990s. Although the gains were modest, the advance was nearly unbroken across many different indicators of system performance, and the improvements were large enough to raise the grades on three of the five First in America Goals (high student performance; safe, orderly, and caring schools; and strong family, business, and community support). Several new indicators were added to this year's report, including National Assessment of Educational Progress grade 4 science assessment, percentage of students promoted having met state grade level standards in reading and mathematics, percentage of 25- to 44-year-old high school graduates enrolled full- or part-time in higher education, average size of classes in kindergarten through grade 3, and infant mortality rate. Two appendices present computation of the First in America grades and the First in America survey methodology. (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 465 005

A Goal for North Carolina's Schools

2001 PROGRESS REPORT

NC SCHOOLS FIRST IN AMERICA 2010

"WE MUST MAINTAIN OUR COMMITMENT TO ENSURE THAT EVERY CHILD IN EVERY COUNTY HAS ACCESS TO A SUPERIOR EDUCATION AND IS GIVEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO SUCCEED."

GOVERNOR MIKE EASLEY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

C. L. Thompson
North Carolina Education Research Council

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

UD 035 053

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

First in America 2001 Progress Report

NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATION RESEARCH COUNCIL
January 2002

Elizabeth Kolb Cunningham and Charles L. Thompson
Editors

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
20301 MAIL SERVICE CENTER
RALEIGH, NC 27699-0301

MICHAEL F. EASLEY
GOVERNOR

January 2002

Dear Friends:

Across the nation, North Carolina is seen as a leader in educational reform and progress. We have been recognized as a leader in school accountability and in teacher quality. Our state made the greatest gains in the nation over the past decade on national assessments in mathematics. North Carolina's university system is regarded as a national leader in research and teaching, our community college system is one of the most comprehensive in the country and nationally recognized for the quality of its workforce development programs, and our 36 independent colleges and universities offer high-quality learning opportunities throughout the state.

But that is not enough. In North Carolina, we are working towards a system of schooling that will lead the nation. We are working to ensure that all children have opportunities to come to kindergarten prepared. We are reducing class sizes in the early grades. We are focused on recruiting and retaining high quality teachers. Our goal is to prepare all North Carolinians for the new economy.

In this spirit, we are pleased to send you the *2001 First in America Progress Report*, the second annual report on North Carolina's goal of becoming *First in America* by the year 2010. The report details North Carolina's performance and our progress since 2000 in the following key areas:

- High Student Performance
- Every Child Ready to Learn
- Safe, Orderly, and Caring Schools
- Quality Teachers and Administrators
- Strong Family, Business, and Community Support

This year's *Progress Report* shows that we are indeed making progress, but that much remains to be done.

As the Education Cabinet, we are committed to achieving this goal. With your support and action, we can lead the nation in education by 2010.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Easley
Governor

Phillip J. Kirk, Jr.
Chairman, State Board of Education

Michael E. Ward
Superintendent, NC Department of Public Instruction

H. Martin Lancaster
President, NC Community College System

Molly Corbett Broad
President, The University of North Carolina

A. Hope Williams
President, NC Independent Colleges & Universities

NC SCHOOLS

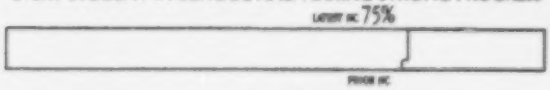
FIRST IN AMERICA

2010

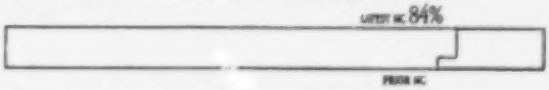
A Goal for North Carolina's Schools 2001 Report Card

C+ HIGH STUDENT PERFORMANCE

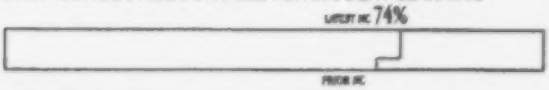
EVERY STUDENT IN SCHOOL AND MAKING STRONG PROGRESS



EVERY GRADUATE READY FOR COLLEGE AND WORK

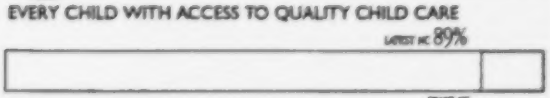


EVERY SCHOOL ACCOUNTABLE FOR STUDENT LEARNING

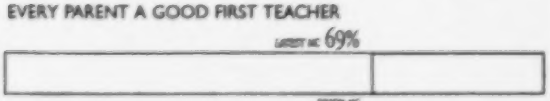


C+ EVERY CHILD READY TO LEARN

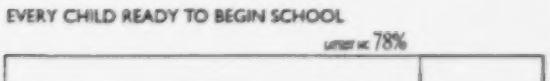
EVERY CHILD WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY CHILD CARE



EVERY PARENT A GOOD FIRST TEACHER

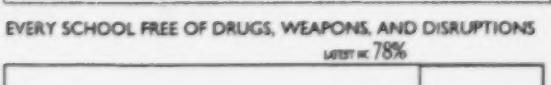


EVERY CHILD READY TO BEGIN SCHOOL

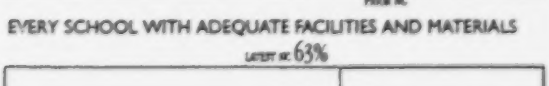


B- SAFE, ORDERLY, AND CARING SCHOOLS

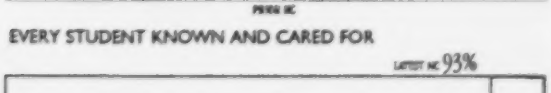
EVERY SCHOOL FREE OF DRUGS, WEAPONS, AND DISRUPTIONS



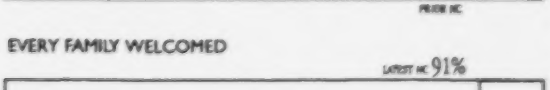
EVERY SCHOOL WITH ADEQUATE FACILITIES AND MATERIALS



EVERY STUDENT KNOWN AND CARED FOR

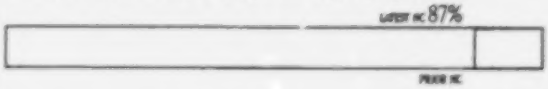


EVERY FAMILY WELCOMED

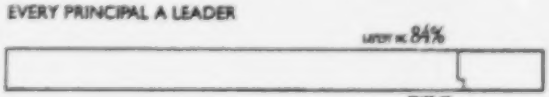


QUALITY TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS B-

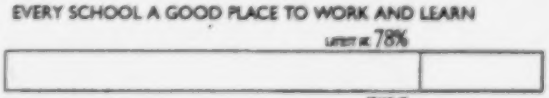
EVERY TEACHER COMPETENT, CARING, AND QUALIFIED



EVERY PRINCIPAL A LEADER

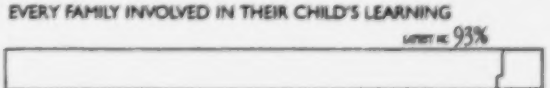


EVERY SCHOOL A GOOD PLACE TO WORK AND LEARN

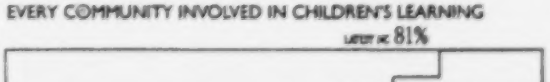


STRONG FAMILY, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT B

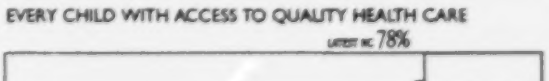
EVERY FAMILY INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILD'S LEARNING



EVERY COMMUNITY INVOLVED IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING



EVERY CHILD WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE



LEGEND

Prior NC: This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the preceding data collection.

Latest NC: This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the most recent data collection available. Most recent data collection dates range from 1993 to 2001.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

A copy of the First in America Reports may also be requested by phone 919.843.8127, by email ltc@northcarolina.edu, or by mail:

North Carolina Education Research Council
Post Office Box 2688
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27515-2688

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table of Contents

FOR MORE INFORMATION 6

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 7

HIGH STUDENT PERFORMANCE 13
- *Every Student in School and Making Strong Progress* 15
- *Every Graduate Ready for College and Work* 20
- *Every School Accountable for Student Learning* 22

EVERY CHILD READY TO LEARN 25
- *Every Child with Access to Quality Child Care* 26
- *Every Parent a Good First Teacher* 28
- *Every Child Ready to Begin School* 31

SAFE, ORDERLY, AND CARING SCHOOLS 35
- *Every School Free of Drugs, Weapons, and Disruption* 36
- *Every School with Adequate Facilities and Materials* 37
- *Every Student Known and Cared For* 39
- *Every Family Welcomed* 41

QUALITY TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS 43
- *Every Teacher Competent, Caring, and Qualified* 45
- *Every Principal a Leader* 48
- *Every School a Good Place to Work and Learn* 50

STRONG FAMILY, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT 53
- *Every Family Involved in Their Child's Learning* 54
- *Every Community Involved in Children's Learning* 57
- *Every Child with Access to Quality Health Care* 58

BIBLIOGRAPHY 62

AUTHORS AND CONTRIBUTORS 64

APPENDICES 66
- *Appendix A: The First in America Grading System* 66
- *Appendix B: 2001 First in America Survey Methodology* 67

For More Information

For additional information on the *First in America* project, visit our website at www.firstinamerica.northcarolina.edu. The following documents are available:

THE HISTORY OF THE *FIRST IN AMERICA* PROJECT

Development of the *First in America* Reports and Selection of the Data
Computation of the *First in America* Grades
How to Read the *First in America* Reports

THE 2001 *FIRST IN AMERICA* REPORTS

2001 Progress Report
2001 Data Report
2001 Report Card
Data Sources and Notes for the 2001 Progress Report

THE 2001 *FIRST IN AMERICA* SPECIAL REPORTS

Eliminating the Black-White Achievement Gap
- Full Research Summary
- Bibliography

The Lessons of Class Size Reduction
Designing a High Quality Pre-Kindergarten Program

Additional copies of the *First in America* Reports may also be requested

by phone
919.843.8127,

by email
fia@northcarolina.edu,

or by mail:
North Carolina Education Research Council
Post Office Box 2688
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27515-2688

Executive Summary

Over the past year, North Carolina's education system continued the steady climb that made the state number one in educational progress during the 1990s. Though the gains were modest, the advance was nearly unbroken across many different indicators of system performance, and the improvements were large enough to raise the grades on three of the five *First in America* goals *(see below)*.

FIRST IN AMERICA GOALS	2000 GRADES	2001 GRADES
HIGH STUDENT PERFORMANCE	C (74%)	C+ (78%)
EVERY CHILD READY TO LEARN	C+ (79%)	C+ (78%)
SAFE, ORDERLY, AND CARING SCHOOLS	C+ (78%)	B- (81%)
QUALITY TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS	B- (83%)	B- (83%)
STRONG FAMILY, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT	B- (80%)	B (84%)

(For an explanation of how the grades were derived, see The System Behind the Grades: Goals, Priorities, Indicators, and Targets below.)

Changes, Strengths, and Weaknesses in System Performance

HIGH STUDENT PERFORMANCE

By the *First in America* measures, the performance of North Carolina's students improved significantly from 2000 to 2001, resulting in a rise in the grade for this goal from a C to a C+. Especially notable was the improvement in the percentage of students scoring proficient or better on the mathematics examination administered by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Between 1996 and 2000, the percentage of 4th graders scoring proficient or better rose from 21 percent to 28 percent. This 7-point improvement placed North Carolina 4th graders in a tie for 8th place among the 41 states tested. Eighth graders improved even more – from 20 percent to 30 percent, a 10-point gain. There were also modest improvements in scores on the state's own End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) examinations for most grades and subjects.

FIRST IN AMERICA GRADES

	2000	2001
HIGH STUDENT PERFORMANCE	C	C+
Every Student in School and Making Strong Progress	73%	75%
Every Graduate Ready for College and Work	80%	84%
Every School Accountable for Student Learning	70%	74%

In addition to good performance on NAEP and state assessments, the state is also performing well on measures of Advanced Placement (AP) examination performance, and on national ratings of the quality of our accountability standards for schools.

While North Carolina continues to outperform most other states on the percentage of students taking advanced courses in mathematics and science, a disturbing trend is emerging. The percentage of 8th graders taking Algebra I, a gateway to higher mathematics and thus to advanced science, has declined from 30 percent in 1997-98 to 27 percent in 1998-99 to 25 percent in 2000-01. Though the state still ranks 5th on this measure, we are clearly moving in the wrong direction.

The grade of C+ for *High Student Performance* reflects an overall balance between these strengths and a smaller number of major weaknesses in this goal area. The factors that pull the grade down are a persistently large minority achievement gap, a high dropout rate, and an improved but still-low percentage of schools that earn the highest designations in the ABCs accountability system – School of Excellence and School of Distinction.

FIRST IN AMERICA GRADES

	2000	2001
EVERY CHILD READY TO LEARN	C+	C+
Every Child with Access to Quality Child Care	89%	89%
Every Parent a Good First Teacher	69%	69%
Every Child Ready to Begin School	78%	78%

Every Child Ready to Learn

There was no change in the *First in America* measures for the *Every Child Ready to Learn* goal, or for the priorities within it. As last year, the grade of C+ reflects the strengths of relatively high levels of preparation among child care teachers, family involvement in Smart Start counties, and the percentage of child care centers that have earned between three and five stars on the state's five-star rating system. Pulling the grade down are high rates of television watching by students and low rates of adult enrollment in postsecondary education, a measure of lifelong learning included here on the premise that better educated adults are better able to support and participate in their children's learning.

In general, the state is doing a good job of providing children with access to quality child care, but poorly on our measures of parents' support for children's learning. The targets for children's readiness were raised by the Education Cabinet, but the higher target levels were applied to both years in order to make scores for the two years comparable, and this resulted in no net change from last year to this year.

FIRST IN AMERICA GRADES

	2000	2001
SAFE, ORDERLY, AND CARING SCHOOLS	C+	B-
Every School Free Of Drugs, Weapons, and Disruption	78%	78%
Every School with Adequate Facilities and Materials	56%	63%
Every Student Known and Cared For	90%	93%
Every Family Welcomed	89%	91%

Safe, Orderly, and Caring Schools

There were improvements in three of the four priorities within this goal area, and the fourth *(Every School Free of Drugs, Weapons, and Disruption)* remained unchanged simply because no new data became available between last year and this year. The most notable improvements were in the climate of schools for students and their parents. The net result of the improvements was an increase in the grade from a C+ in 2000 to a B- in 2001.

While there was improvement in teachers' ratings of the facilities, equipment, and materials available to them, the figures remain dismally low, with only about 50 percent indicating that they are adequate. The state's progress in technology for student use *(Students per Internet-connected computer)* looked impressive at first blush (25 students per computer to 11 students per computer), but other states also made rapid progress, so our ranking rose very little (from 48th to 45th). A similar pattern emerged in technology use by teachers. While the level of use increased in North Carolina, other states improved at an even more rapid pace. Thus, North Carolina's ranking slid from 22nd to 28th.

By our measures, North Carolina schools are warm and welcoming places for both students and their parents, and are becoming more so. More parents say that their child is known and cared about by the school, and chronic absenteeism declined (though other states made even more progress, and our ranking slipped from 9th to 11th). Our "parental welcome index," composed of responses to several separate questions, remains high.

FIRST IN AMERICA GRADES

	2000	2001
QUALITY TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS	B-	B-
Every Teacher Competent, Caring, and Qualified	87%	87%
Every Principal a Leader	85%	84%
Every School a Good Place to Work and Learn	78%	78%

Quality Teachers and Administrators

The grade for *Quality Teachers and Administrators* remains a B-. This year's data confirms what last year's showed: North Carolina benefits from a complement of fine teachers and sound administrators. But some aspects of the work environment we put them in need improvement. Partly as a result, the state is losing too many teachers, which we can ill afford in a time of teacher shortage. About 14 percent of North Carolina's teachers left positions in their school district last year, up from 13 percent in the previous year.

Both teachers and principals do well on national examinations, a high percentage of the state's teachers are fully licensed, and North Carolina continues to lead the nation in the number of teachers with certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching.

Standards. (Board certification goes only to teachers who pass a rigorous assessment designed to identify highly accomplished teaching.) One concern in this area is that by the tough standard we set, only a little more than half of the state's teachers (51 percent) rate their principal as an effective leader (agree or strongly agree with 12 of 14 positive statements about their principal's performance). Yet about three quarters (72 percent) of the parents we surveyed continue to express satisfaction with their principals.

Neither the professional development teachers are getting nor the work environment for teachers and principals rate highly. Only about six in ten teachers (59 percent) say the professional development they got last year was of high quality. And only *three* in ten (30 percent) rated their work environment positively, down by 8 percentage points from last year. Teachers were most concerned about their compensation, recognition and support, paperwork, and lack of opportunities for professional development and advancement. As was true last year, teachers felt underpaid, undersupplied, and underappreciated. Almost six in ten principals (57 percent) gave their work environment a positive rating, unchanged from last year and higher than for teachers, but still disturbingly low.

Strong Family, Business, and Community Support

FIRST IN AMERICA GRADES

	2000	2001
STRONG FAMILY, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT	B-	B
Every Family Involved in Their Child's Learning	92%	92%
Every Community Involved in Children's Learning	72%	81%
Every Child with Access to Quality Health Care	76%	78%

North Carolina's children enjoy good support from their families. And the support they receive from businesses and the community is getting stronger. The *First in America* grade for this goal rose from a B- last year to a B on the *2001 Report Card*, and all priority areas saw from slight to very significant improvement.

The *First in America* scores for parent involvement include both measures of what teachers do to promote involvement and what parents do to support their children's learning at home and in school. The scores are good on both counts. According to their own reports, teachers are making stronger efforts to communicate with parents – up by nine percentage points from last year (from 70 to 79 percent). The increased communication has not yet resulted in increased participation in either school or home activities, but the figure for involvement in children's learning at home remained impressive (89 percent).

According to parents' reports, the percentage of employers that offer special opportunities to support children's learning has improved sharply from last year – from 40 percent to 55 percent. Included here are opportunities such as maternity or paternity leave, family leave, flex-time, child care assistance, and time off for mentoring, tutoring, or other volunteer work in schools. Despite the improvement, however, the state remains well short of the goal that 9 of 10 employers will offer such opportunities.

In the final priority area, *Every Child with Access to Quality Health Care*, scores have improved only slightly. The state's historically high infant mortality rate has declined over the past two years, but according to the most recent cross-state data (1998), North Carolina ranked 46th in the nation. Even with the recent improvements, we undoubtedly remain far from our target. By contrast, our rate for on-time immunization against many childhood diseases has improved by 6 percentage points and is well into the top ten. The percentage of children covered by health insurance has also risen modestly (2 points), thanks largely to increases in insurance provided by employers.

The System Behind the Grades: Goals, Priorities, Indicators, and Targets

A bit of background on the *First in America* goals and grading system may help place the results in context.

In his final State of the State Address, then-Governor Jim Hunt took note of the fact that North Carolina had been first in educational progress over the decade of the 90s and challenged the state to become first in actual performance by 2010, the end of the next decade. He then worked with the Education Cabinet to establish five broad goals (see *2001 Report Card*). (Convened by the Governor, the Education Cabinet also includes the Chair of the State Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the President of the North Carolina Community College System, the President of The University of North Carolina, and the President of the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities.) The Education Cabinet also spelled out priorities within each goal area, chose several indicators of performance for each priority, and set a specific target to be reached on each indicator by 2010.

FIRST IN AMERICA GRADING SCALE

100 =	A+
94-99 =	A
90-93 =	A-
88-89 =	B+
84-87 =	B
80-83 =	B-
78-79 =	C+
74-77 =	C
70-73 =	C-
68-69 =	D+
64-67 =	D
60-63 =	D-
below 60 =	F

The targets for each indicator are presented in the *First in America 2001 Data Report*, along with information on the state's current and prior performance on the indicator. The bar graphs on the Report Card show where our education system stands, on average, on the indicators of performance for each priority. For example, for the priority *Every Student in School and Making Strong Progress*, the state is now 75 percent of the way to the targets set by the Education Cabinet. All of the percentages reflected in the bar graphs and in the grades are computed in the same way. First we compute the percentage for each indicator (current performance as a percentage of the target performance). Then we take the average of these percentages to develop a score for the priority. The average of the scores for the priorities within each goal becomes the basis for the grade for the goal. So the grades that we award are derived objectively from the targets, data on current performance, and a constant grade scale (at left).

Changes to the 2001 *First in America* Reports

From last year to this year, a few important changes were made in the system of targets and indicators. In each instance, we wanted to be sure that any changes in the scores and grades reflected actual changes in the education system's performance – not just changes in our system for measuring it. So we went back and recomputed the scores for last year, using this year's indicators and targets. In other words, the question was, "If the scoring system were exactly the same from one year to the next, how would the scores and grades look in each of the two years?" While we are aware that this may cause some initial confusion, we decided that including the full range of available data and allowing for accurate year-to-year comparisons was important enough to justify taking that risk.

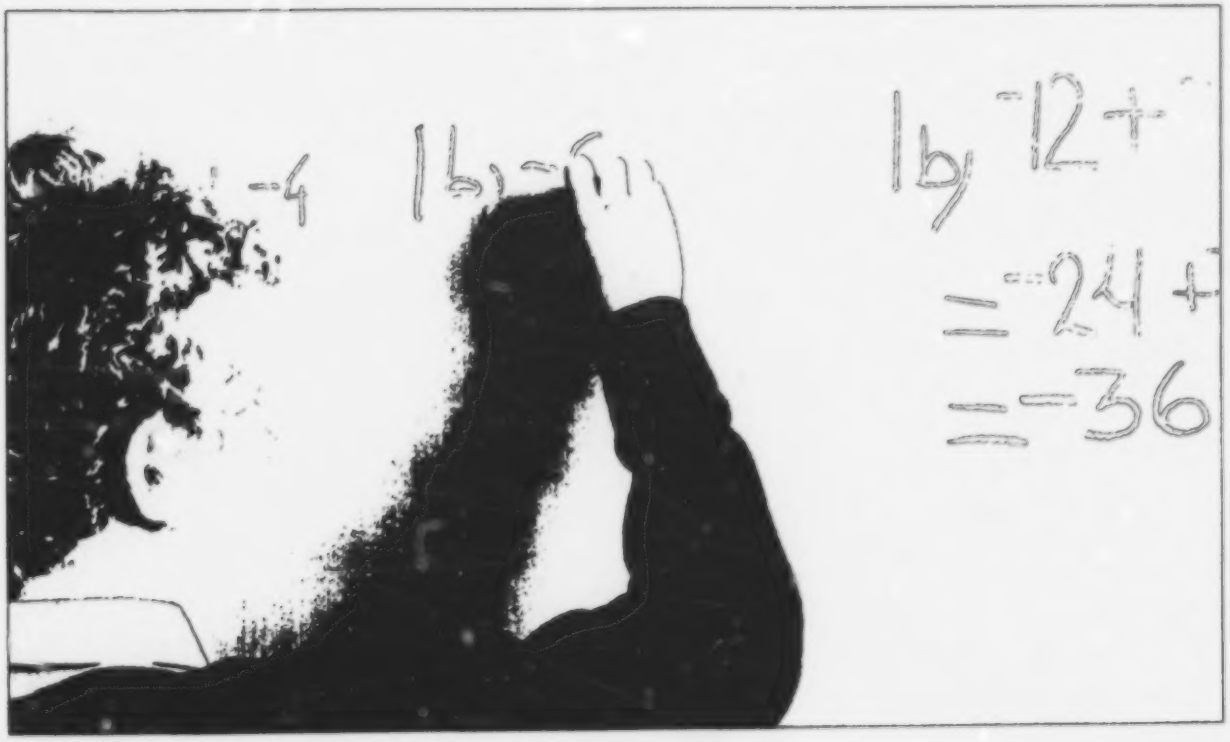
The first change implemented by the Education Cabinet was an increase in the target scores for the indicators of children's readiness for school. Statewide data on North Carolina children's school readiness had never been collected before the initial *First in America* reports, issued in December of 2000. In light of North Carolina's historically high rates of poverty and low rates of adult literacy, early childhood experts predicted that it would be difficult for the state to reach the national average on measures of children's readiness for school. Yet when results from the first-ever readiness survey were in, North Carolina's children scored very close to the national average. So this year, the Education Cabinet raised the targets to a more ambitious level. As the 2001 reports reflect, this change resulted in a lower grade for the goal *Every Child Ready to Learn* than the grade we awarded last year on the basis of the lower targets. Last year, we awarded a B-. But if we had been using the new, higher targets, we would have awarded a C+.

A change was also made in the indicator used to track North Carolina's college enrollment rate. In the 2000 report, we used an indicator that is based on the number of high school graduates in one year and the number of students enrolled in two and four-year colleges the next year. But on this indicator, solid current data that permit comparison of North Carolina's rate with the rates for other states are no longer available. So we shifted to another indicator for which good current data are available. The new indicator reflects the percentage of traditionally college-age students (18-24 years old) who are either enrolled in two- or four-year colleges or have graduated from them.

Finally, several new indicators were added to this year's reports. These indicators were either previously unavailable or have been substituted for indicators that are no longer available for inclusion in the *First in America* reports.

- *NAEP Grade 4 Science:* In 2000, NAEP conducted the first state-level science assessment for 4th grade students. So this year is the first year when 4th grade science scores have been available to include in our reports. Though we do include the 4th grade NAEP science scores in the reports, we have not included them in calculating the grade for *High Student Performance*. Including the NAEP scores would have improved the grade, but would have also given the impression that North Carolina students are performing better this year than they were performing last year. Actually, no data exist to show how well they were performing on NAEP last year. Thus, to make sure that improvements in grades reflect actual improvements in performance rather than changes in the indicators we are using, we did not include the NAEP 4th grade science scores in computing this year's grade. NAEP 4th grade science scores will, however, be included in future *First in America* grade calculations.
- *Percentage of students promoted having met state grade level standards in reading and mathematics:* The *First in America* reports include the percentage of tested 5th grade students promoted having met state grade level standards in reading and mathematics during the 2000-01 school year. This is the first year in which the 5th grade gateway standard based on state ABCs assessments has been implemented. Thus, for reasons analogous to those given for the NAEP 4th grade science scores, the promotion rate was not included in computing this year's grade for *High Student Performance*. Fifth grade promotion percentages will, however, be included in future *First in America* grade calculations.
- *Percentage of 25-to-44 year old high school graduates enrolled full- or part-time in higher education:* The *First in America* reports now include data on the percentage of 25-to-44 year olds currently enrolled in any post-secondary education. This measure is based on the 12-month *Current Population Survey* (CPS) maintained by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Because of small sample sizes, the state-level completion data are calculated using three-year averages. The Bureau of Labor Statistics supplied the latest available score for North Carolina based on responses from their 1996 to 1998 surveys and a prior score based on responses to their 1995 to 1997 surveys. In this case, it was possible to include data on the newly-adopted indicator in calculating this year's grade and yet to preserve true comparability between the 2000 grade and the 2001 grade by recomputing the 2000 grade with the use of data from the new indicator. We have done so.
- *Average size of classes in kindergarten through 3rd grade:* The average size of classes in North Carolina kindergarten through third grade has been included in the *First in America* reports. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction provided current class size data from the 2001-02 school year and prior data from the 2000-01 school year. Therefore, data on the average K-3 class size have been included in the grades for both 2000 and 2001.
- *Infant Mortality Rate.* State infant mortality rates have been included in the *First in America* reports. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report the latest available cross-data from 1998 and prior data from 1997. Infant mortality rates have been substituted for a related indicator for which data are no longer available. The situation on infant mortality data is analogous to the situation on K-3 class size. It was possible to recompute a score for last year that includes the new indicator and drops the old one. Thus, we were able to include the infant mortality rate in computing the grades without distorting the year-to-year comparison.

More information on the
First in America Grading System
is available on the
First in America website at
www.firstinamerica.northcarolina.edu


-4
16)-(11)
16 -12+
=-24+
=-36

High Student Performance

Overall, North Carolina earned a C+ (78 percent) in this area. If we assigned grades for the priorities within this goal, a C (75 percent) would be awarded for *Every Student in School and Making Strong Progress*, a B (84 percent) would be awarded for *Every Graduate Ready for College and Work*, and a C (74 percent) would be assigned to *Every School Accountable for Student Learning*.

North Carolina's performance improved in each priority area within this goal. The state's success on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments and North Carolina End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) exams, and improvements in high school graduation rates and program completion rates for exceptional students account for the progress.

FIRST IN AMERICA GRADES

	2000	2001
HIGH STUDENT PERFORMANCE	C	C+
Every Student in School and Making Strong Progress	73%	75%
Every Graduate Ready for College and Work	80%	84%
Every School Accountable for Student Learning	70%	74%

HIGH STUDENT PERFORMANCE

TARGETS | INDICATORS | SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK

Changes: ⬆ North Carolina's score was significantly better. / ⬇ North Carolina's score was significantly worse. / ⬌ Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant. / * On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.

EVERY STUDENT IN SCHOOL AND MAKING STRONG PROGRESS

• NC will be one of the top 10 states on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments.

o Percentage of students scoring proficient or higher on NAEP assessments

	Latest NC Score	Prior NC Score	Change	NC Rank	US Average	Target Score	First
Grade 4 Reading	28%	30%	⬌	Tied for 22nd	31%	34%	46% (CT)
Grade 4 Math	28%	21%	⬆	Tied for 8th	25%	28%	34% (MN)
Grade 4 Science	24%	N/A	N/A	Tied for 27th	28%	32%	45% (MA)
Grade 8 Reading	31%	N/A	N/A	Tied for 12th	31%	34%	42% (CT, ME)
Grade 8 Writing	27%	N/A	N/A	Tied for 6th	27%	27%	44% (CT)
Grade 8 Math	30%	20%	⬆	13th	26%	32%	40% (MN)
Grade 8 Science	27%	24%	⬌	23rd	30%	35%	46% (MT)

• Nine out of 10 NC students will score at or above grade level on End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) examinations.

o Percentage of students scoring at or above grade level on NC's EOG and EOC examinations

NC EOG: % of students in grades 3–8 scoring at or above Level III / change (prior NC score in parentheses)

Reading	Mathematics	Both
77% (75%) ⬆	82% (80%) ⬆	72% (70%) ⬆

NC EOC: % scoring at or above Level III / change (prior NC score in parentheses)

Algebra I:	Algebra II:	Geometry:	Physical Science:	Biology:
76% (69%) ⬆	73% (63%) ⬆	64% (60%) ⬆	60% (57%) ⬆	61% (58%) ⬆
Chemistry:	**Physics:**	**IEPS:**	**English I:**	**US History:**
66% (62%) ⬆	74% (73%) ⬆	70% (67%) ⬆	68% (68%) ⬌	51% (47%) ⬆

• NC will eliminate the minority achievement gap.

o Gap in percent proficient on NAEP and percent at or above grade level on NC EOG and EOC examinations *

	Black/White Gap	Hispanic/White Gap	American Indian/White Gap (in percentage points)
NAEP	30	24	19
EOG & EOC	31	21	23

• Nine out of 10 North Carolina students will be promoted to the next grade having met state standards.

o Percentage of students promoted having met state grade level standards in reading and mathematics

Grade 5: Latest NC Score	Prior NC Score	Change
92%	N/A	N/A

• NC will be 1st in the nation in the percentage of students taking advanced courses.

o Percentage of students taking advanced courses in math and science

	Latest NC Score	Prior NC Score	Change	NC Rank	US Average	Target Score	First
% of 8th graders taking Algebra:	25%	27%	⬇	5th	20%	55%	53% (UT)
% of high school students taking upper level math courses:	61%	59%	⬆	1st	46%	61%	61% (NC)
% of high school students taking upper level science courses:	30%	31%	⬇	Tied for 13th	28%	42%	42% (MS)

• 95 percent of NC's students will finish high school.

o Percentage of students completing high school or GED

Latest NC Score	Prior NC Score	Change	NC Rank	US Average	Target Score	First
86%	85%	⬌	Tied for 33rd	86%	95%	95% (ME, MD)

• NC will be one of the top 10 states in program completion rates for exceptional students.

o Percentage of exceptional students age 14 or older who successfully complete their special education program

Latest NC Score	Prior NC Score	Change	NC Rank	US Average	Target Score	First
46%	48%	⬇	Tied for 33rd	48%	53%	87% (TX)

• NC will be among the 10 states with the lowest high school dropout rate.

o Percentage of teens age 16 to 19 who are high school dropouts *

Latest NC Score	Prior NC Score	Change	NC Rank	US Average	Target Score	First
11%	12%	⬌	Tied for 36th	9%	7%	5% (HI, MD, WI)

LEGEND

o *New or updated data are provided for this indicator and are discussed in the subsequent section.*

* *On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.*

Latest NC Score: *This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the most recent data collection available. Most recent data collection dates range from 1990 to 2000.*

Prior NC Score: *This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the preceding data collection.*

Change: *Change arrows show North Carolina's progress from the last data collection to the most recent data collection.*

- ⬆ *North Carolina's score is significantly better.*
- ⬇ *North Carolina's score is significantly worse.*
- ⬌ *Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change is not significant.*

NC Rank: *North Carolina's rank among states for which data are available. States are ranked from best to worst.*

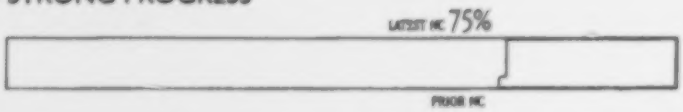
US Average: *This is the average score for the United States taken from the most recent data collection available.*

Target Score: *This is the score North Carolina currently needs to achieve to reach the First in America target.*

First: *The score and state abbreviation is listed for the state receiving the best reported score.*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EVERY STUDENT IN SCHOOL AND MAKING STRONG PROGRESS



In this section, we report on North Carolina's performance on a number of assessments, both national and North Carolina based. These assessments allow us to compare our outcomes to the performance of other students across the nation. Overall, the state is 75 percent of the way toward achieving its targets on this priority. While scores on several assessments are improving, we are still short of the goal of being among the top ten states on many of these measures. A principal reason for the shortfall is the still-large achievement gap between the scores of white students and students of other racial and ethnic groups. Yet it appears that, with effort, many of the targets in this area can be achieved within the next 10 years.

UPDATED OR NEW DATA FOR 2001:

- PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SCORING PROFICIENT OR HIGHER ON NAEP ASSESSMENTS
- PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SCORING AT OR ABOVE GRADE LEVEL ON NC'S EOG AND EOC EXAMINATIONS
- GAP IN PERCENT PROFICIENT ON NAEP AND PERCENT AT OR ABOVE GRADE LEVEL ON NC EOG AND EOC EXAMINATIONS*
- PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS PROMOTED HAVING MET STATE LEVEL STANDARDS IN READING AND MATHEMATICS
- PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS TAKING ADVANCED COURSES IN MATH AND SCIENCE
- PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL OR GED
- PERCENTAGE OF EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS AGE 14 OR OLDER WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THEIR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
- PERCENTAGE OF TEENS AGE 16 TO 19 WHO ARE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS*

NC will be one of the top 10 states on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SCORING PROFICIENT OR HIGHER ON NAEP ASSESSMENTS

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) collects information about the performance of students in reading, writing, mathematics, science, social studies and cultural arts. Every two years, NAEP assesses students in grades 4, 8, and 12, although not every grade is tested in every subject each year. In 2000, students were tested in mathematics and science.

NAEP reports results as the percent of students scoring at the basic, proficient, and advanced levels of achievement. Students scoring at "proficient" or higher have demonstrated competence in challenging subject matter, including subject knowledge, application of this knowledge to real world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to this subject matter. Because the Education Cabinet wants every child performing at a high level, we concentrate on the percentage of students performing at the "proficient" and "advanced" levels.

Mathematics

The NAEP mathematics assessment presents multiple-choice and short-answer questions on five math topics: numbers, measurement, geometry, data analysis, and algebra. In 2000, 41 states participated in the 4th grade math assessment and 40 states participated in the 8th grade assessment.

Between 1996 and 2000, North Carolina's 4th graders improved their performance by 7 percentage points, from 21 percent to 28 percent scoring at proficient or higher. Since the first state-level NAEP mathematics assessment in 1992, North Carolina's 4th graders have improved their scores by 15 percentage points – more than any other state in the nation. This improvement places North Carolina in a tie for 8th place among participating states. North Carolina has achieved the *First in America* target on this indicator.

From 1996 to 2000 there was an even greater increase in the percentage of 8th graders scoring at proficient or higher – from 20 percent to 30 percent. North Carolina's 8th graders lead the nation in mathematics improvement. Since the initial assessment of 8th graders in 1990, North Carolina's scores have improved by 21 percentage points. Despite this impressive progress, the percentage of 8th graders scoring at proficient or higher must increase by an additional 3 percentage points to reach the *First in America* target and move into the top ten in the nation.

It is important to note that in 2000, North Carolina excluded or "exempted" a substantially higher percentage of students from the NAEP assessment than we did in 1996. Our exemption rate is also substantially higher than the average exemption rate nationally. Because many of the students who are exempted are special education students, excluding more of them tends to raise the state's average scores. Our analysis suggests that some – but not all – of NC's gain on NAEP mathematics scores from 1996 to 2000 is probably attributable to the elevated exemption rate. (For a more complete explanation, see *Data Sources and Notes for the 2001 Progress Report* on the *First in America* website at www.firstinamerica.northcarolina.edu.)

Science

The NAEP science assessment asks multiple-choice and constructed-response questions in three branches of science: physical, earth, and life science. The questions focus on conceptual understanding of scientific facts, scientific investigation, practical reasoning, the nature of science, and the organizing themes of science. In 2000, 39 states participated in the 4th grade assessment, and 38 states participated in the 8th grade assessment.

In 2000, NAEP conducted the first state-level assessment of 4th graders in science. Twenty-four percent (24 percent) of North Carolina's 4th graders achieved proficiency. This compares with 28 percent nationally, placing the state in a tie for 27th place. To reach the *First in America* target, North Carolina's 4th grade students must gain at least 8 percentage points, and perhaps more, since other states will also be working to improve their performance.

North Carolina's 8th graders fared slightly better with 27 percent receiving scores of proficient or higher. This score places North Carolina at 23rd in the nation. While the state improved its performance by 3 percentage points since the initial assessment conducted in 1996, 8th grade scores remained 3 percentage points below the national average and 8 percentage points below the current *First in America* target.

The target calls for North Carolina to be among the top ten states in NAEP assessments. While the state achieved this goal in grade 4 mathematics, we will need to continue our current rate of progress if we are to outpace other states and reach the *First in America* targets in grade 8 mathematics and grades 4 and 8 science by 2010.

Nine out of 10 NC students will score at or above grade level on End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) examinations.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS SCORING AT OR ABOVE GRADE LEVEL ON NC'S EOG AND EOC EXAMINATIONS

Every year since 1992-93, North Carolina students in grades 3 through 8 have been tested in reading and mathematics through the End-of-Grade (EOG) testing program administered by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Similarly, students enrolled in 10 high school courses have taken state-created End-of-Course (EOC) tests. Students receive scores in one of four achievement levels, with levels III and IV representing work that is at or above grade level. The *First in America* target for this indicator is for nine out of 10 students to score at or above grade level.

During the 2000-01 school year, a larger percentage of students scored at or above grade level on the EOG reading and mathematics exams in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 than in the prior year. When the scores of 3rd through 8th graders are combined, 77 percent of students were at or above grade level in reading and 82 percent of students were at or above grade level in mathematics. The percentage of students receiving passing scores on both exams improved by 2 percentage points to 72 percent. Since the first EOG examinations were conducted in 1992-93, scores in both reading and mathematics have improved by 19 percentage points. Given the pace of improvement on EOG exams, it seems possible that the *First in America* target can be achieved by 2010.

Between 1999-2000 and 2000-01, the percentage of students earning scores of level III or above increased on nine of the ten high school EOC exams conducted – Algebra I, Algebra II, geometry, physical science, biology, chemistry, physics, ELPS, and US History. There was no change in student scores on the English I exam. While there are clear improvement trends on most EOC exams, student performance has not reached 90 percent in any of the tested areas.

NC will eliminate the minority achievement gap.

GAP IN PERCENT PROFICIENT ON NAEP AND PERCENT AT OR ABOVE GRADE LEVEL ON NC EOG AND EOC EXAMINATIONS*

Disaggregated test scores reveal a persistent and alarming gap between white and minority group scores on NAEP assessments and the North Carolina End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) exams. As the aggressive *First in America* target for this indicator demonstrates, the Education Cabinet is committed to eliminating this achievement gap.

On NAEP assessments, the gap between white and minority students did not change significantly between 2000 and 2001. The gap between white and black performance is 30 percentage points, the gap between white and Hispanic performance is 24 percentage points, and the gap between white and American Indian performance is 19 percentage points. On average across all assessments, 40 percent of white students received scores of proficient or higher, compared with 10 percent of black students, 16 percent of Hispanic students, and 21 percent of American Indian students. These differences remain large and troubling.

A similar picture emerged on the 2000-01 North Carolina EOG and EOC exams. The gap between white and black performance is 31 percentage points, the gap between white and Hispanic performance is 21 percentage points, and the gap between white and American Indian performance is 23 percentage points. We find that on average across all exams, 79 percent of white students scored at or above grade level, compared with 38 percent of black students, 57 percent of Hispanic students, and 55 percent of American Indian students. While a considerable amount of progress remains to be made, the gap in black and American Indian student scores did narrow significantly between 2000 and 2001.

The gap in achievement will be closed only if the rate of improvement in scores for minority students outpaces the rate of improvement for white students. While the achievement gap has narrowed over the last nine years, the target of eliminating the gap will not be achieved in the next 10 years without significant additional effort.

Nine of 10 NC students will be promoted to the next grade having met state standards.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS PROMOTED HAVING MET STATE GRADE LEVEL STANDARDS IN READING AND MATHEMATICS

In August 1999, the State Board of Education adopted Student Accountability Standards designed to eliminate social promotion. Social promotion is the practice of promoting students to the next grade regardless of whether they have mastered the appropriate material and are academically prepared to work at the next level.

The Student Accountability Standards establish four gateway grades – 3, 5, 8, and 12. At grades 3, 5, and 8, students will be required to score at or above grade level, or level III, on the North Carolina EOG assessments. Twelfth grade students will be required to pass the North Carolina High School Exit Exam currently under development. Students failing to achieve at grade level may be promoted only if their principal or school district determines that they are prepared to meet the requirements of the next grade or if they are exempted from the gateway requirements as a result of limited English proficiency or a disability. The 5th grade Student Accountability Standards took effect during

2000-01 5TH GRADE STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS

CATEGORY	# OF STUDENTS	% OF TESTED STUDENTS
Students Promoted:		
Standards Met	91,830	92.2%
Standards Not Met	5,406	5.4%
TOTAL	97,236	97.6%
Students Retained:		
Standards Met	412	0.4%
Standards Not Met	1,995	2.0%
TOTAL	2,407	2.4%

the 2000-01 school year. The 3rd and 8th grade standards will be implemented during the 2001-02 school year, and the 12th grade standards will be in effect for the graduating class of 2005.

The implementation of the Student Accountability Standards provides new and important information about the progress of North Carolina's students. For this reason, the percentage of students promoted having met state grade level standards in reading and mathematics has been added as a *First in America* indicator. The *First in America* target is for nine of 10 students to be promoted to the next grade having met state standards. Available data on 5th grade students is included in the 2001 reports. Data on 3rd, 8th, and 12th grade students will be included as their standards take effect.

During the 2000-01 school year, 99,643 fifth grade students participated in the EOG assessments in reading and mathematics. Of these students, 91,830 or 92 percent were promoted having met state standards. North Carolina's 5th graders exceeded the *First in America* target on this measure.

It is also important to track the percentage of students promoted without having met state standards and the percentage of students retained in their current grade. As the chart indicates, an additional 5,406 students – or 5 percent – were promoted at the recommendation of their principal or school district without having met established state standards. Slightly fewer than 2.5 percent of all tested 5th graders were retained in their current grade. The majority of these retained students – 2 percent or 1,995 students – did not meet state assessment standards. The remaining 412 students were retained as a result of a local school district requirement or at their principal's recommendation that they had not made adequate progress in their current grade.

NC will be 1st in the nation in the percentage of students taking advanced courses.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS TAKING ADVANCED COURSES IN MATH AND SCIENCE

The *First in America* reports monitor three indicators of advanced science and mathematics coursetaking – the percentage of 8th grade students taking Algebra I (normally thought of as a high school course), the percentage of high school students taking advanced mathematic courses (geometry, Algebra II, trigonometry, pre-calculus, and calculus), and the percentage of high school students taking advanced science courses (chemistry, physics, and advanced science).

In 2000-01, one-fourth (25 percent) of North Carolina's 8th graders were enrolled in Algebra I. Only four states reported higher enrollment rates. Of concern, North Carolina's enrollment rate continued a gradual decline from 30 percent in 1997-98 to 27 percent in 1998-99 and finally to 25 percent in 2000-01. North Carolina will not achieve the aggressive *First in America* target of being the top state in the nation unless this pattern is reversed.

Between 1998-99 and 2000-01, the percentage of North Carolina high school students enrolled in advanced mathematics courses increased by 2 percentage points – from 59 to 61 percent. North Carolina leads the nation on this measure with a score 15 percentage points above the national average.

The percentage of students taking advanced science courses in North Carolina high schools fell by one percentage point between 1998-99 and 2000-01. Currently 30 percent of the state's high school students are enrolled in advanced science classes. This places North Carolina in a tie for 13th in the nation. North Carolina will need to increase its enrollment rate by 12 percentage points in order to reach first in the nation.

95 percent of NC's students will finish high school.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL OR GED

To estimate each state's high school completion rate, the US Department of Commerce's Bureau of the Census conducts an annual survey in which they determine the percentage of 18-to-24 year olds who are not currently

enrolled in high school and who hold a high school credential (a diploma, Certificate of Completion, or GED). To boost the reliability of the Bureau's results, state-level completion data are calculated using three-year averages.

In the report for 1998-2000, 86 percent of North Carolina's 18-to-24 year olds reported having completed high school or their GED. This percentage is up slightly from the 85 percent registered from 1996 to 1998, but the difference is not statistically significant. The *First in America* reports establish an aggressive target of 95 percent for high school completion. While North Carolina's current score is only 9 percentage points below this target, the state's completion rates have improved by only 3 percentage points since 1989. Without a concerted effort, this target will be difficult to achieve by 2010.

NC will be one of the top 10 states in program completion rates for exceptional students.

PERCENTAGE OF EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS AGE 14 OR OLDER WHO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THEIR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The US Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs collects information annually on the number and percentage of students who successfully complete special education, either by graduating from high school or by completing their Individual Education Program (IEP). For the most part, exceptional students are expected to complete the same course of study as other students in order to qualify for a high school diploma. The IEP is a plan that takes into account the adaptations and supports that an exceptional student will need to complete his or her education.

In 1997-98, North Carolina's performance on this measure declined by 2 percentage points. Forty-six percent (46 percent) of North Carolina's exceptional students aged 14 or older successfully completed their program and/or graduated. This puts North Carolina just below the national average of 48 percent and in a tie for 22nd place on this measure. North Carolina must improve its performance by 7 percentage points in order to achieve the *First in America* target of being among the top ten states.

NC will be among the 10 states with the lowest high school dropout rate.

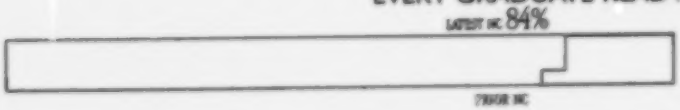
PERCENTAGE OF TEENS AGE 16-TO-19 WHO ARE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS*

The *First in America* reports include dropout data as reported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Casey Foundation researchers use special tabulations of the *Current Population Survey* database prepared by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. They report the percentage of 16-to-19 year olds who are school dropouts. To increase statistical reliability, they report 3-year averages.

In 2001, the Foundation reported that 11 percent of North Carolina's 16-to-19 year olds are high school dropouts. This percentage did not change significantly since the 2000 report. North Carolina is tied for 36th in the nation. The state must improve its current score by 2 percentage points to reach the national average and 4 percentage points to reach the current *First in America* target of being among the top ten states in the nation. While this target does not appear out of reach, it will be quite a challenge. No state has improved its dropout rate by more than 4 percentage points over the past five years.

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK
Changes: ↑ North Carolina's score was significantly better. / ↓ North Carolina's score was significantly worse. / ◆◆ Because North Carolina's score still couldn't — change was not significant. / * On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.		
EVERY GRADUATE READY FOR COLLEGE AND WORK		
• Nine out of 10 NC students will pass a rough high school exit exam.	Percentage of students passing an exit examination	*Available Fall 2004*
• NC will be one of the top 10 states in SAT scores.	○ Average SAT scores and adjusted SAT scores for NC students	AVERAGE SAT SCORES: LATEST NC SCORE: 992 · PRIOR NC SCORE: 988 · CHANGE: ↑ · NC RANK: Tied for 47th · US AVERAGE: 1020 · TARGET SCORE: 1133 · FIRST: 1195(IA) SAT SCORES ADJUSTED FOR PARTICIPATION RATES: LATEST NC SCORE: 1095 · PRIOR NC SCORE: 1089 · CHANGE: ↑ · NC RANK: 32nd · US AVERAGE: 1049 · TARGET SCORE: 1080 · FIRST: 1111(IA)
• NC will be among the top 5 states in the number of Advanced Placement (AP) exams scored at or above level 3.	○ Number of AP exams scored at or above level 3 for every 1,000 11th and 12th graders	LATEST NC SCORE: 150 · PRIOR NC SCORE: 135 · CHANGE: ↑ · NC RANK: 10th · US AVERAGE: 133 · TARGET SCORE: 195 · FIRST: 416(DC)
• NC will be one of the top 10 states in the percentage of 18-to-24 year olds attending college.	○ Percentage of 18-to-24 year olds enrolled in two- and four-year programs of higher education	LATEST NC SCORE: 31% · PRIOR NC SCORE: 27% · CHANGE: ◆◆ · NC RANK: Tied for 28th · US AVERAGE: 33% · TARGET SCORE: 36% · FIRST: 42%(CT,MD)
• Nine out of 10 NC students who complete a vocational course of study will be highly rated by their employers.	○ Percentage of vocational graduates ranked above average when compared to other new employees	LATEST NC SCORE: 72% · PRIOR NC SCORE: 71% · CHANGE: ↑

EVERY GRADUATE READY FOR COLLEGE AND WORK



In this section, we consider measures specifically related to students' preparation for college and work. If a letter grade were given for the priority, North Carolina would earn a B or 84 percent – a 4 percentage point gain since 2000. In order to achieve the targets within this priority, North Carolina must continue to increase student participation and performance on Advanced Placement examinations, boost college attendance rates, and improve the on-the-job performance of vocational education graduates.

UPDATED OR NEW DATA FOR 2001:

- ○ AVERAGE SAT SCORES AND ADJUSTED SAT SCORES FOR NC STUDENTS
- ○ NUMBER OF AP EXAMS SCORED AT OR ABOVE LEVEL 3 FOR EVERY 1,000 11TH AND 12TH GRADERS
- ○ PERCENTAGE OF 18-TO-24 YEAR OLDS ENROLLED IN TWO- AND FOUR-YEAR PROGRAMS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
- ○ PERCENTAGE OF VOCATIONAL GRADUATES RANKED ABOVE AVERAGE WHEN COMPARED TO OTHER NEW EMPLOYEES

NC will be one of the top 10 states in SAT scores.

AVERAGE SAT SCORES AND ADJUSTED SAT SCORES FOR NC STUDENTS

Because SAT scores tell us something about whether students who want to attend college are well prepared to do so, they are used by many colleges and universities, including the institutions of the University of North Carolina, as part of the admissions process. For this reason, SAT scores are included in the *First in America* reports as an indicator of the preparation of North Carolina's students for the rigors of college.

Average SAT score

While North Carolina has made consistent gains on the SAT, so have other states. The result is that the state's scores have improved, but our ranking has not changed. Despite a gain of 4 points between 2000 and 2001, from 988 to 992, the state remained 47th in the nation. North Carolina's performance remains well below both the national average of 1020 and the current *First in America* target of 1133.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

SAT scores adjusted for participation rate

While SAT scores are viewed by many members of the press and the public as important indicators of quality, they generally represent a very poor measure of a state school system's performance. Eighty percent (80 percent) of the state-to-state variance in scores simply reflects the percentage of students who take the test in each state (Powell and Steelman, 1996). If the percentage of students who take the test is small and elite enough, a state can do well even if its public school system is poor. Among the ten states with the highest SAT scores, none had a participation rate greater than 12 percent. By contrast, among the 10 lowest performing states, all had participation rates greater than 53 percent.

It is possible to adjust state SAT scores to account for the effect of participation rates. This allows for a comparison of scores from all states, treating them as if each state had the same participation rate. As the *2001 Data Report* reveals, this procedure increases North Carolina's average score to 1035 -- a 6 point gain since 2000. The state's rank also improves somewhat -- to 32nd in the nation. Even with the adjustment for participation, however, North Carolina does not approach the target of 1080 required to be among the top ten states on the SAT.

NC will be among the top 5 states in the number of Advanced Placement (AP) exams scored at or above level 3.

NUMBER OF AP EXAMS SCORED AT OR ABOVE LEVEL 3 FOR EVERY 1,000 11TH AND 12TH GRADERS

The Advanced Placement (AP) Program of the College Board allows students the opportunity to gain college credit while still in high school. In North Carolina, more than 87 percent of public high schools offer AP courses. Students in these courses may take AP exams offered by the Educational Testing Service. The exams are graded on a scale of 1 to 5 with most colleges awarding credit to students scoring a 3 or better.

The *First in America* reports include data on the number of AP exams receiving a grade of 3 or above for every 1,000 11th and 12th graders enrolled in North Carolina high schools. This statistic has the benefit of providing information about both the extent of AP coursetaking and the success of students on AP exams.

In 2000, there were 135 AP exams with acceptable scores per 1,000 students enrolled in grades 11 and 12. In 2001, North Carolina's score improved to 150 per 1,000. This places the state at 11th in the nation on this measure, well above the national average of 121. North Carolina has not yet reached the aggressive *First in America* target of being among the top 5 states in the nation. However, if the current improvement trend continues, the goal can be achieved by 2010.

NC will be one of the top 10 states in the percentage of 18-to-24 year olds attending college.

PERCENTAGE OF 18-TO-24 YEAR OLDS ENROLLED IN TWO- AND FOUR-YEAR PROGRAMS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The 2000 *First in America* reports included data on higher education enrollment obtained from the National Education Goals Panel. Because the Panel is no longer providing this information, the 2001 and subsequent *First in America* reports will include data on the enrollment status of 18-to-24 year olds in each state based on the *Current Population Survey* of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Because of small sample sizes, state-level completion data are calculated using three-year averages. The Bureau of Labor Statistics supplied the latest available score for North Carolina based on responses to their 1996 to 1998 surveys and a prior score based on responses to their 1995 to 1997 surveys.

On this measure, the target is for North Carolina to be among the top ten states in the nation. The most recent *Current Population Surveys* reveal that 31 percent of North Carolina's 18-to-24 year olds are enrolled in two- or four-year programs of higher education. The percentage is up 4 points from the previous score, but because sample sizes are small, the difference is not statistically significant. North Carolina is currently in a tie for 28th in the nation and 5 percentage points below the *First in America* target.

Related Information and Perspectives

The University of North Carolina (UNC) also calculates higher education enrollment data and reports that, in 2000, as many as 65 percent of North Carolina high school graduates from the prior June were enrolled in higher education. The state's college-going rate (excluding students enrolled in business and trade schools) was just above the national average of 63 percent for 2000.

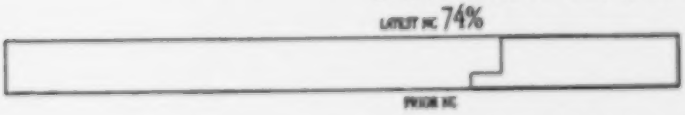
Nine out of 10 NC students who complete a vocational course of study will be highly rated by their employer.

PERCENTAGE OF VOCATIONAL GRADUATES RANKED ABOVE AVERAGE WHEN COMPARED TO OTHER NEW EMPLOYEES

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) offers high school students the opportunity to participate in a vocational education program designed to provide them with the skills required for particular fields of employment. To track the success of their vocational education program, the Department of Public Instruction surveys more than 13,000 employers, asking them to assess the level of preparedness for work of students who have completed the North Carolina vocational education program. Employers are asked to compare vocational graduates to other new employees of about the same age. In 2000, the DPI reported that 72 percent of vocational education completers were rated above average, up slightly from 71 percent reported in 1999. This score remains significantly below the *First in America* target of 90 percent.

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK
Changes: ↑ North Carolina's score was significantly better / ↓ North Carolina's score was significantly worse / ◆◆ Because North Carolina's score was similar — change was not significant. (* On the indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.		
EVERY SCHOOL ACCOUNTABLE FOR STUDENT LEARNING		
• NC's system of standards, assessments, and accountability will be consistently ranked among the best in the nation.	○ External evaluations of standards, assessments, and accountability systems	LATEST NC SCORE: B / 83% · PRIOR NC SCORE: B+ / 87% · CHANGE: ↓ · NC RANK: Tied for 16th · US AVERAGE: N/A · "LEADER" SCORE: B+ / 88% · "BEST": A / 98% (MD) (Education Week evaluates standards, assessments, and accountability systems.) LATEST NC SCORE: B- / 2.8 GPA · PRIOR NC SCORE: C / 2.0 GPA · CHANGE: ↑ · NC RANK: Tied for 9th · US AVERAGE: C- / 1.72 GPA · "LEADER" SCORE: C+ / 2.6 GPA · "BEST": A- / 3.6 GPA (GA) (Fordham Foundation ratings are based on an assessment of state standards.)
• Nine of 10 NC schools will be recognized as Schools of Excellence or Schools of Distinction by the ABCs program.	○ Number and percentage of schools receiving each ABCs designation	LATEST NC SCORE · PRIOR NC SCORE · CHANGE SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE: 171 (8%) · 73 (4%) · ↑ SCHOOLS OF DISTINCTION: 640 (30%) · 510 (24%) · ↑ LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS*: 31 (1%) · 45 (2%) · ↑

EVERY SCHOOL ACCOUNTABLE FOR STUDENT LEARNING



Over the last ten years, North Carolina has built a system of education standards, assessments, and accountability. In this section, we detail how others view the state's system and how well North Carolina's schools are doing as measured by the system. This year, the state is 74 percent of the way to its targets in this priority area – an increase of 4 percentage points since 2000. North Carolina receives relatively high marks on external evaluations of the accountability system. However, the priority score is depressed by school performance on the state ABCs system. Improvement in this priority area will require more schools to be designated as Schools of Excellence or Schools of Distinction.

UPDATED OR NEW DATA FOR 2001:

- ○ EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS OF STANDARDS, ASSESSMENTS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS
- ○ NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS RECEIVING EACH ABCS DESIGNATION

NC's system of standards, assessments, and accountability will be consistently ranked among the best in the nation.

EXTERNAL EVALUATIONS OF STANDARDS, ASSESSMENTS, AND ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS

Education Week's annual report on the status of education in the nation, *Quality Counts*, includes an assessment of state accountability systems. *Education Week* bases its evaluation on the clarity and specificity of state standards, the use of public accountability reports, rewards for schools and districts, and support for low-performing schools.

In 2001, *Education Week* gave North Carolina a score of 87 percent, a B+, for its standards, assessments, and accountability system. In 2002, North Carolina's score declined to 83 percent, a B. North Carolina's rank slipped from 6th to 16th in the nation in 2002. The state is now 5 percentage points from achieving the *First in America* target of being among the top ten states in the nation.

Nine of 10 NC schools will be recognized as Schools of Excellence or Schools of Distinction by the ABCs program.

THE NORTH CAROLINA ABCS ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

In 1996-97, North Carolina launched the ABCs of Public Education. This program evaluates elementary, middle, and high school performance on the basis of two standards.

The actual growth of students' skills in reading, mathematics and writing is measured and compared with a prediction based on past performance. The prediction formula, developed by the Department of Public Instruction, calculates for students in each grade and each school a unique growth target based on their own performance in the prior year as compared with the performance of other students in that grade throughout the state.

The absolute performance of a school is calculated by figuring the percent of students whose End-of-Grade or End-of-Course tests indicate that they are performing at or above grade level. The two standards are then combined and schools are designated as meeting or exceeding growth expectations or failing to achieve the growth standard.

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS RECEIVING EACH ABCS DESIGNATION

During the 2000-01 school year, 2,157 public schools participated in the North Carolina ABC assessment system. Participating schools could be recognized as Schools of Excellence, Schools of Distinction, or Low Performing Schools, based on their performance on state assessments. Schools of Excellence have more than 90 percent of students working at or above grade level and have met their growth expectations, while Schools of Distinction have 80 percent to 90 percent of students working at or above grade level. Low Performing Schools have less than 50 percent of students working at or above grade level and fail to achieve their predicted academic growth for the year. The target in this area is for 90 percent of North Carolina schools to be designated as either Schools of Excellence or Distinction.

In 2000-01, 171 schools were recognized as Schools of Excellence, up from 73 schools in the prior year. Six hundred forty schools were awarded the School of Distinction designation, up from 510 the year before. Thus, 38 percent of all schools in the state are either Schools of Distinction or Schools of Excellence, up from 28 percent in 1999-2000. While it may be difficult to maintain this rapid rate of improvement, if the current trend continues, the *First in America* targets could be achieved in this decade.

The percentage of Low Performing schools declined last year. In 1999-2000, 45 schools, or 2 percent of participating schools, were designated as low performing. In 2000-01, only 31 schools, or 1.4 percent, were low performing.

Ryan Bodenhammer, First Grade,
Brassfield Elementary School, Raleigh, NC

Every Child Ready to Learn

Just so in 2000, North Carolina received a grade of C+ on this goal area. If we assigned grades for the priorities within the goal, North Carolina would earn a B+ (89 percent) for its efforts to provide quality child care, a D+ (69 percent) on measures of parental support for children's learning, and a C+ (78 percent) on measures of children's readiness to begin school and schools' readiness to serve them.

More than ten years ago, the National Education Goals Panel focused the nation's attention on the importance of ensuring that every child begin school ready to learn (National Education Goals Panel, 1997). Today, a growing body of research recognizes the vital, long-term effects of building a strong foundation in early childhood on later developments and school success.

Guaranteeing that every child has access to quality child care is one of the first and most important steps to ensuring that all of North Carolina's children are ready to learn. But high quality child care alone will not ensure that all children arrive ready to succeed in school. How ready children are to succeed in school also depends on support from their families (University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, Smart Start Evaluation Team, 1997). All parents must be their child's first teacher and educational role model by providing access to literacy materials in their home and improving their own knowledge and skills. Armed with a high quality early education and support from their families, all of North Carolina's children can arrive ready to succeed in school.

FIRST IN AMERICA GRADES

	2000	2001
EVERY CHILD READY TO LEARN	C+	C+
Every Child with Access to Quality Child Care	89%	89%
Every Parent a Good First Teacher	69%	69%
Every Child Ready to Begin School	78%	78%

EVERY CHILD READY TO LEARN

TARGETS | INDICATORS | SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK

Change: ⇧ North Carolina's score was significantly better. / ⇩ North Carolina's score was significantly worse. / ⇔ Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant. / * On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.

EVERY CHILD WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY CHILD CARE

- **NC will provide high quality child care, encourage family support for children's learning, and facilitate access to health resources for all children.**

Smart Start indicators (19 Pioneer Counties)

Child care improvement

CHILD-TO-TEACHER RATIOS:*

	LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
INFANTS	4-TO-1	4-TO-1	⇔
TODDLERS	6-TO-1	6-TO-1	⇔
PRE-SCHOOLERS	9-TO-1	9-TO-1	⇔

CHILD CARE TEACHERS WITH SOME COLLEGE OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE COURSEWORK:

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
77%	59%	⇧

Family support for children's learning

% OF FAMILIES WHO ENGAGED IN EDUCATIONALLY IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES WITH THEIR CHILD:

	LATEST NC SCORE:	US AVERAGE:
READ TO A CHILD	91%	90%
TOLD A STORY	79%	75%
TAUGHT LETTERS, WORDS, NUMBERS	82%	88%

Health resources provided

% OF CHILD CARE CENTERS PROVIDING HEALTH SCREENINGS:

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
74%	55%	⇧

o Child care teachers' average salaries

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
$6.95/hr	$6.77/hr	⇧	Tied for 30th	$7.42/hr	$7.86/hr	$10.62/hr(DC)

o Ratings of child care programs in NC

% OF LICENSED DAY CARE CENTERS RECEIVING EACH STAR RATING:

☆☆	☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆	☆☆☆☆☆	TOTAL AT 3-5 STARS:
6%	52%	30%	12%	94%

LEGEND

o *New or updated data are provided for this indicator and are discussed in the subsequent section.*

* *On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.*

Latest NC Score: *This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the most recent data collection available. Most recent data collection dates range from 1990 to 2000.*

Prior NC Score: *This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the preceding data collection.*

Change: *Change arrows show North Carolina's progress from the last data collection to the most recent data collection.*

- ⇧ *North Carolina's score is significantly better.*
- ⇩ *North Carolina's score is significantly worse.*
- ⇔ *Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change is not significant.*

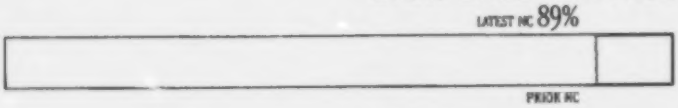
NC Rank: *North Carolina's rank among states for which data are available. States are ranked from best to worst.*

US Average: *This is the average score for the United States taken from the most recent data collection available.*

Target Score: *This is the score North Carolina currently needs to achieve to reach the First in America target.*

First: *The score and state abbreviation is listed for the state receiving the best reported score.*

EVERY CHILD WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY CHILD CARE



North Carolina is doing a good job of providing access to quality child care. In 2001, the state remained 89 percent of the way to its targets for this priority. Boosting the priority score are the contributions of Smart Start to improving child care, encouraging family involvement, and providing access to health screenings, as well as the high quality of child care programs participating in the state's rated license system. High child-to-teacher ratios in child care programs and uncompetitive child care teacher salaries bring it down.

Research confirms that the quality of child care children receive affects their health and development while they are in child care and their readiness for school in the future. Children who attend higher quality child care centers perform better on measures of cognitive skills (for example, math and reading) and social skills (for example, cooperating with teachers and peers) in child care and in the early grades of school (University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Team, 1999).

High quality child care programs are characterized by: (1) low ratios of children to teachers, (2) well-trained teachers who receive the continual development and support necessary to provide an engaging and appropriate curriculum, (3) involved and supportive parents, (4) attention to the health and development of children, and (5) low rates of teacher turnover (Frede, 1995). We use measures of these characteristics in order to evaluate whether North Carolina's children have access to high quality child care.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

UPDATED OR NEW DATA FOR 2001:

- CHILD CARE TEACHERS' AVERAGE SALARIES
- RATINGS OF CHILD CARE PROGRAMS IN NC

NC will provide high quality child care, encourage family support for children's learning, and facilitate access to health resources for all children.

CHILD CARE TEACHERS' AVERAGE SALARIES

The average child care teacher nationwide earns $7.42 an hour or $15,430 per year – $2,220 below the federal poverty level for a family of four. North Carolina's child care teachers currently earn an average annual salary of $14,460 – well below this national average. With an hourly rate of $6.95, North Carolina ranks 30th in the nation, tied with Florida. North Carolina's salary rate is significantly lower than the national leader, Washington, D.C., where the hourly rate is $10.62.

Despite North Carolina's substantial investments in scholarships to child care teachers seeking additional education and training, in incentives to child care programs employing better trained caregivers, and in efforts to attract and retain high quality caregivers, our progress in increasing average child care teacher salaries is being outpaced by the progress of other states. While the average salary rate in North Carolina increased by $.18 per hour from 1998 to 1999, the average rate of increase in the 50 states and Washington, D.C. was $.23 per hour. As a result, North Carolina slipped from 26th to 30th in the national rankings. The state also slipped farther from the *First in America* goal of being among the top ten states in the nation. In 1998, North Carolina needed to increase its average salary rate by $.78 to reach the top ten. Currently, the state needs to increase its average salary rate by $.91 per hour to achieve this goal.

Related Information and Perspectives

Because child care teacher salaries included in the *First in America* report are not adjusted for cost-of-living differences, state-to-state comparisons are imprecise (Nelson, 1991). Adjusted salary figures allow us to equate salaries in different states because they take into account the relative purchasing power of a dollar in each state. For instance, the adjusted hourly rate in Washington, D.C. is $8.13 per hour (down from an unadjusted rate of $10.62 per hour), reflecting the higher costs of rent, food, and other basic costs of living in the area. When adjusted, North Carolina's average salary rate rises to $7.51 (from an unadjusted rate of $6.95 per hour), reflecting our lower costs. When cost-of-living adjustments are applied, North Carolina ranks 16th in the nation and just $.13 below an adjusted target of $7.64 per hour (American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, Research Information and Services Department, 2000).

Though North Carolina's national ranking improves when cost of living is taken into account, salaries across the nation are too low to retain good teachers. A report issued by the Center for the Child Care Workforce showed that 75 percent of teachers and 40 percent of directors employed in the nation's child care centers in 1996 were no longer employed in the profession in 2000 (Whitebook, Howes, and Phillips, 1998). The report attributes this high rate of turnover to the lack of employment benefits, few opportunities for leadership and professional advancement, and most importantly, low salaries. High staff turnover rates reduce the likelihood that children will develop close and trusting relationships with their caregivers and force programs to hire teachers with less education and experience.

RATINGS OF CHILD CARE PROGRAMS IN NC

In 1999, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services adopted a new five-star child care rating system for all regulated child care facilities (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development, 2000). The five-star system informs families about the quality of their child care program, the experience and education of their children's teachers, and their program's compliance with the law. One star indicates only that the program meets the minimum state health and safety requirements. Licenses with 2-5 stars

THE NORTH CAROLINA 5-STAR RATING SYSTEM EVALUATES CHILD CARE PROGRAMS IN THREE AREAS:

Program standards measures
- The care & treatment provided by caregivers
- The activities & meals offered
- The toys & supplies made available
- The cleanliness & comfort of the facilities
- The health practices employed by staff members

Education standards measures
- The education & training of the program director & staff
- Providing staff members additional opportunities to gain their Early Childhood Certification

Compliance history measures
- The program's history of compliance with North Carolina child care regulations, including staff age & education requirements, maximum child-to-teacher ratios, health & safety measures, & discipline procedures

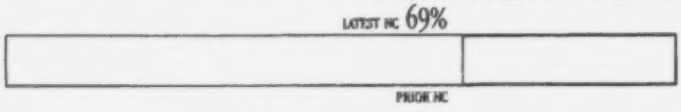
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

represent higher levels of quality, with five stars signaling to parents that the center offers the highest quality of care available.

The *First in America* target on this measure is to have 90 percent of applicants receive between 3 and 5 stars. In November of 2000, 1,640 programs had applied for rated licenses and 94 percent of the applicants had met this standard. In the *2000 Progress Report* we questioned whether the percentage of 3-to-5 star programs might decline as more programs applied for rated licenses. Fortunately, while the number of participating programs has more than doubled in the last year, 94 percent of applicants, or 3,267 programs, received between 3 and 5 stars.

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK
Changes: ↑ North Carolina's score was significantly better. / ↓ North Carolina's score was significantly worse. / ↔ Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant. / * On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.		
EVERY PARENT A GOOD FIRST TEACHER		
• NC will be one of the nation's top 10 states in home support for literacy	○ Home environment support for literacy	% OF 4TH GRADERS REPORTING PRESENCE OF LITERACY MATERIALS AT HOME: LATEST NC SCORE: 67% / PRIOR NC SCORE: 72% / CHANGE: ↓ / NC RANK: Tied for 30th / US AVERAGE: 67% / TARGET SCORE: 71% / FIRST: 75%(ND) % OF 8TH GRADERS REPORTING PRESENCE OF LITERACY MATERIALS AT HOME: LATEST NC SCORE: 81% / PRIOR NC SCORE: 81% / CHANGE: ↔ / NC RANK: Tied for 15th / US AVERAGE: 78% / TARGET SCORE: 83% / FIRST: 86%(MN,ND,VT) % OF 4TH GRADERS SPENDING 5 OR MORE HOURS WATCHING TV DAILY:* LATEST NC SCORE: 25% / PRIOR NC SCORE: 28% / CHANGE: ↑ / NC RANK: Tied for 24th / US AVERAGE: 25% / TARGET SCORE: 16% / FIRST: 12%(MN) % OF 8TH GRADERS SPENDING 5 OR MORE HOURS WATCHING TV DAILY:* LATEST NC SCORE: 23% / PRIOR NC SCORE: 24% / CHANGE: ↔ / NC RANK: Tied for 27th / US AVERAGE: 19% / TARGET SCORE: 13% / FIRST: 9%(MT)
• NC will rank among the top 10 states in the percentage of working age adults continuing to pursue their education.	○ Percentage of 25-to-44 year olds currently enrolled in any post-secondary education	LATEST NC SCORE: 3% / PRIOR NC SCORE: 3% / CHANGE: ↔ / NC RANK: Tied for 35th / US AVERAGE: 3% / TARGET SCORE: 5% / FIRST: 6%(DC,MD,NM,RI)

EVERY PARENT A GOOD FIRST TEACHER



Children rely on their families to read to and with them, to make books and reading materials available to them in their home, and to limit their television viewing. They also rely on their parents to model the importance of lifelong learning. In this environment, children begin to develop the skills that will prepare them for their own successes in school and in life.

North Carolina is 69 percent of the way to its targets for this priority. If we assigned grades for performance on the priorities, North Carolina would receive a D+ on these measures of (a) family support for children's learning and (b) parents' involvement in lifelong learning. North Carolina's families get high marks for providing their children with access to a variety of literacy materials in their homes. But in order to improve its performance on this priority and the overall goal, North Carolina must reduce the amount of time children spend watching television and increase adults' participation in continuing education.

UPDATED OR NEW DATA FOR 2001:

- ○ ADULT LITERACY RATE
- ○ HOME ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT FOR LITERACY
- ○ PERCENTAGE OF 25-TO-44 YEAR OLDS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN ANY POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

ADULT LITERACY RATE

The 2000 *First in America* reports included data on the percentage of North Carolinians who demonstrated adequate proficiency on a 1992 literacy assessment conducted by the United States Department of Education. At the time, it appeared that North Carolina would participate in a repeat of this assessment to be conducted in 2001. The new assessment would have provided updated state-level data on the literacy skills of North Carolina's adult population. But the new assessment has since been delayed and a majority of states, including North Carolina, have indicated that they cannot afford the costly new assessment (as much as $750,000 for North Carolina)(U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 2001). Because updated, cross-state data will no longer be available, the adult literacy indicator has been removed from the *First in America* reports.

NC will be one of the nation's top 10 states in home support for literacy.

HOME ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT FOR LITERACY

Research confirms that by making reading materials available to children in their homes and limiting the time that children spend watching television, parents can improve their children's preparation for and learning in school (Anderson, 1985).

In each of their last four assessments, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has tested the relationship between students' access to home literacy materials – magazines, newspapers, encyclopedias, and at least 25 books – and their reading achievement. Across the nation, students who reported having more types of literacy materials in their homes also had higher average scores on NAEP reading assessments (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1996).

Prior data on North Carolina's 4th and 8th graders was obtained in 1998. Since that time, North Carolina's rank improved slightly even though our students' scores changed very little. In 2000, 67 percent of North Carolina's 4th graders and 81 percent of the state's 8th graders reported having access to several types of literacy materials in their homes. North Carolina's 4th graders tied for 20th in the nation – up from 22nd in 1998 – and the state's eighth graders tied with seven other states for 13th in the nation – up from 18th in 1998. North Carolina must increase access to literacy materials by 4 percentage points for 4th graders and 2 percentage points for 8th graders to reach the current *First in America* targets.

Many studies have indicated an inverse relationship between excessive television viewing and reading achievement (Beentjes and Van der Voort, 1998). Students who reported watching at least 4 hours of television daily scored lower on NAEP assessments than students who watched less television (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1996). Similarly, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has found that students who watch only 2 hours of television per day outscore all other students on the North Carolina End-of-Grade exams.

In 1998, 28 percent of North Carolina's 4th graders reported watching 5 or more hours of television daily. Fourth graders improved to 25 percent in 2000. Although this was not a statistically significant change, the national ranking of the state's 4th graders did rise from 30th to 24th. Yet the state must make considerable strides if it is to reach the current *First in America* target of 16 percent.

Eighth graders also failed to improve by a statistically significant amount. Twenty-three percent (23 percent) of North Carolina's 8th grade students reported watching more than five hours of television daily, as compared with 24 percent in 1998. The current percentage is ten points worse than the *First in America* target of 13 percent. Montana led the nation with only 9 percent of 8th grade students in the state watching 5 or more hours of television daily.

NC will rank among the top 10 states in the percentage of working age adults continuing to pursue their education.

PERCENTAGE OF 25-TO-44 YEAR OLDS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN ANY POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

In an effort to gauge the ability of parents to support and foster the academic skills of their children, the Education Cabinet has added a new measure to this year's *First in America* reports. The reports now include data on the percentage of 25-to-44 year olds currently enrolled in any post-secondary education. The Education Cabinet has set a target of ranking among the top ten states on this measure of lifelong learning. Well-educated parents are better able to fulfill their role as their child's first and most important teacher.

In addition, many studies have shown that, generally, the higher the parents' level of education, the better their children perform in school. This has been true for NAEP assessments in all subject areas – students who reported higher levels of parental education have demonstrated higher performance on all assessments. Researchers offer several explanations for the effect of parental education on children's school performance:

- Increased parental education typically results in higher family income. Among those over 25 years old who failed to complete high school or receive a GED, 55 percent reported no earnings in the 1999 *Current Population Survey* of the U.S. Bureau of the Census compared to 25 percent of those with at least a high school degree or GED. For respondents reporting any earnings, the median income for those without a high school diploma or GED is $15,334 compared to $29,294 for people with at least a high school degree or GED (Greene, 2001). In turn, higher income enables parents to improve children's educational opportunities.
- According to a study by the National Commission on Reading, reading aloud to children is the single most important intervention that parents can undertake to help children develop their literacy skills (1985). Yet the *National Survey of America's Families* found that children from families with low education and income levels were half as likely to be read to three times per week. Often their families reported that they lacked the resources to buy books or to access libraries and bookstores (High, 1999).
- Low-income families more often lack the literacy and language skills required to make a meaningful contribution to their children's literacy development. Through verbal interactions with their parents, children increase their own language skills, vocabulary, and knowledge about the world. Parents help to build literacy skills by asking questions of their children, providing positive feedback in response to children's comments, and engaging children in language play such as word games, rhymes, and songs (McConnell and Rabe, 1999).
- As the level of family education increases, so too does the level of reported parental participation in their children's education at home and school. Low-income families more often report that inflexible job schedules and child care arrangements and a lack of transportation and free time limit their ability to play an active role in their children's education (Step-by-Step, 1993).

From 1996-98, 3 percent of North Carolina's 25-to-44 year olds were enrolled in post-secondary education. The state is ranked 35th, tied with 10 other states and the national average. While North Carolina is close to achieving its current target of 5 percent, state participation rates regularly cluster between 6 and 2 percent. Thus, it may take more effort than it would appear for the state to move out of the pack and reach its target.

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK

Changes: ↑ North Carolina's score was significantly better. / ↓ North Carolina's score was significantly worse. / ↔ Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant. / * On the indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.

EVERY CHILD READY TO BEGIN SCHOOL

• NC kindergartners will arrive ready to succeed in school and NC schools will be ready to meet their needs.

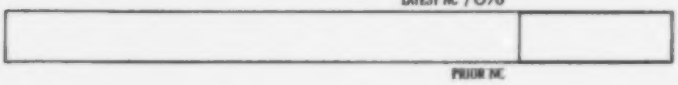
○ NC kindergartners' readiness scores

	LATEST NC SCORE	US AVERAGE	TARGET SCORE
HEALTH STATUS	85%	83%	90%
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	98	100	110
APPROACHES TOWARD LEARNING	81%	83%	90%
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	97	100	110
MATH DEVELOPMENT	95	100	110

○ NC schools' readiness for kindergartners

	LATEST NC SCORE	TARGET SCORE
AVERAGE KINDERGARTEN CLASS SIZE*	20	18
KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD LICENSURE	5%	90%

EVERY CHILD READY TO BEGIN SCHOOL



Children's success in school hinges on a range of factors, including their health and physical development, their social and emotional development, their approaches to learning, their language and communication skills, and their general knowledge. In this section, we report selected results from the *Fall 2000 North Carolina School Readiness Assessment* conducted by the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The Assessment measures kindergartners' readiness to succeed in school and North Carolina schools' readiness to meet their needs. If we awarded a grade in this priority area, North Carolina would earn a C+ or 78 percent for its efforts to ensure that *Every Child is Ready to Begin School.*

UPDATED OR NEW DATA FOR 2001:

○ NC KINDERGARTNERS' READINESS SCORES

○ NC SCHOOLS' READINESS FOR KINDERGARTNERS

NC kindergartners will arrive ready to succeed in school and NC schools will be ready to meet their needs.

NC KINDERGARTNERS' READINESS SCORES

In the fall of 2000, a research team from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center at the University of North Carolina conducted the initial test of the *North Carolina School Readiness Assessment*. The results from an initial subset of the children assessed were presented in the 2000 *First in America* reports. This year's report includes the full results from a larger statewide sample of 1,034 kindergartners and 189 public schools. The *School Readiness Assessment* measures five aspects of the condition of children as they enter school – health status, social development, approaches toward learning, language development, and math development.

Data from other states are not available on the readiness measures included in the assessment. Only an average from a national sample is available for purposes of comparison. Therefore, the 2000 *First in America* reports set the target for North Carolina kindergartners to score at or above the national average on each measure. The initial 2000 results revealed that North Carolina's kindergartners were close to meeting or exceeding the national average on each measure. Based on these positive findings, the Education Cabinet has decided to boost the current *First in America* targets for each of the components of the *School Readiness Assessment*. This reflects their belief that it is important to set goals that stretch the capacities and sharply raise expectations for the state.

On the two components that are measured in percentages – health status and approaches toward learning – the targets were increased from the national average to a goal of 90 percent. The three remaining components – social, language, and math development – are measured on a scale that runs from 40 to 160 points. The original target for each component was to reach the national average of 100. The Cabinet has increased each target to 110.

FIVE COMPONENTS OF THE *NC SCHOOL READINESS ASSESSMENT*

- **Health status** includes children's overall health, as well as their physical development and abilities.
- **Social development** includes children's feelings about themselves and others, ability to form positive relationships with adults and children, ability to understand the perspective and feelings of others, and skills needed to get along well in a group setting.
- **Approaches toward learning** include curiosity, enjoyment of learning, confidence, creativity, and attention to task, reflection, and interests.
- **Language development** includes verbal and nonverbal skills to convey and understand others' meaning as well as early literacy skills.
- **Math development** measures early math and basic problem-solving skills.

Health status

The *First in America* reports include parents' ratings of the health status of their kindergartners. A sample of North Carolina parents was asked to rate their child's health as poor, fair, good, very good, or excellent. Eighty five percent of North Carolina kindergartners were rated as having very good or excellent health. North Carolina is 5 percentage points from achieving the *First in America* target of 90 percent on this measure.

Of particular concern, a significantly lower percentage of low-income North Carolina kindergartners – only 76 percent – were in very good or excellent health. These children were also less likely to exhibit age-appropriate motor skills (able to write and draw rather than scribble and to walk without tripping, stumbling, or falling easily). In addition, they were less likely to have health insurance.

Social development

The social and emotional maturity evidenced by children is an important part of their development and preparation for school. The *School Readiness Assessment* asked kindergarten teachers to rate their students' social skills and problem behaviors. North Carolina kindergartners received an average score of 98 on ratings of their social development. This is just below the national average of 100 on this measure and 12 points below the *First in America* target of 110. Scores on this scale can range from 40 to 160, with most scores falling between 70 and 130. In North Carolina, the scores for individual children ranged from 63 to 123.

As on measures of health status, low-income North Carolina kindergartners received ratings significantly below the state average. Low-income students were reported by their teachers to exhibit significantly fewer positive social skills and more problem behaviors.

Approaches toward learning

Children's school success depends not simply on academic skills but also on motivation, learning styles, and attitudes. The parent survey conducted as a part of the *School Readiness Assessment* asked parents to assess to what degree their children are eager to learn new things, creative in their work or play, and able to persist at tasks. The *First in America* reports give the average percentage of kindergartners whose parents responded that they often or very often exhibit these approaches toward learning.

On average, 81 percent of North Carolina's kindergartners – compared with 83 percent of the nation's kindergartners – met this standard. In order to achieve the *First in America* target of 90 percent, North Carolina must improve its current performance by 9 percentage points. Most of this progress will need to come in the area of persistence at tasks. On this measure, only 63 percent of students received high ratings. North Carolina's children received much higher ratings for their eagerness (91 percent) and creativity (91 percent).

Language development

Communication skills help children to learn about and understand the world around them and to begin to develop the early literacy skills that will be an essential part of their early school success. As part of the *School Readiness Assessment*, North Carolina kindergartners completed a language evaluation designed to test their understanding of words. On average, they received a score of 97, compared to a national average score of 100. The scores for individual children ranged from 47 to 137.

Compared to national norms, more North Carolina kindergartners had very low scores (28 percent in North Carolina versus 16 percent nationally) and fewer North Carolina kindergartners had very high scores (4 percent in North Carolina versus 16 percent nationally). Also of concern, the language and communication skills of children from lower-income families were significantly lower than those of children from higher-income families.

In order to achieve the *First in America* target, scores must improve by 13 points. While this difference may sound slight and the performance of North Carolina's students is promising, this task may be more difficult than it would appear. A significant effort is required to increase average performance by even one point, and an even greater effort will be needed to improve the skills of low-achieving and low-income North Carolina kindergartners.

Math development

The early math skills component of the *School Readiness Assessment* measures children's ability to do simple mathematical tasks, such as counting and identifying parts and wholes. North Carolina kindergartners received an average score of 95 on this measure.

Their performance was lower than the national average of 100 and 15 points below the target score of 110. Scores on this scale can range from 40 to 160, with most scores falling between 70 and 130. In North Carolina, the scores for individual children ranged from 46 to 143. Achieving this *First in America* target will take a significant and determined effort.

NC SCHOOLS' READINESS FOR KINDERGARTNERS

Strengthening achievement requires not only getting children ready for school, but also getting schools ready for the particular children they serve. The *Ready Schools* component of the *North Carolina School Readiness Assessment* monitors the capacity of North Carolina's schools to educate all children entering kindergarten. Information about the readiness of North Carolina's schools was gathered by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Two measures are included in the *First in America* reports – average kindergarten class size and the percentage of kindergarten teachers with early childhood certification.

Average kindergarten class size*

Especially in the early grades, small class sizes can have an important and long-term impact on a child's achievement in school. (For more information on kindergarten class size, see *Safe, Orderly, and Caring Schools, Every Student Known and Cared For)* The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recommends kindergarten classes of 18 or fewer students. Accordingly, the *First in America* reports adopt 18 as the target score for kindergarten class size.

For the 2001-02 school year, North Carolina has an average kindergarten class size of 20 students. The average size for kindergarten is likely to decrease during the school year as a result of the 2001-03 state budget, which implements the first stage of a class size reduction initiative by providing funds to reduce kindergarten class size to 19 students in the 2001-02 school year and to 18 students in the 2002-03 school year. This policy represents an important first step in achieving the *First in America* target. However, meeting this *First in America* target will remain a challenge for the state. North Carolina will need several hundred additional qualified teachers and expanded classroom facilities to accommodate the current kindergarten enrollment in classes of 18.

Percentage of kindergarten teachers with early childhood licensure

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction offers several types of licensure for kindergarten teachers – including birth to kindergarten (BK), pre-school add-on (an additional training component available for teachers already licensed in early childhood, elementary, or elementary special education), early childhood (covering grades kindergarten through 4th), and elementary (for grades kindergarten through 6). While 95 percent of North Carolina's kindergarten teachers have been awarded one of these certifications and are fully licensed to teach kindergarten, only those teachers with BK and pre-school add-on licensure have received extensive training on the distinctive developmental and educational characteristics of children from birth through age 6. For this reason, the *First in America* target on this measure is for 90 percent of kindergarten teachers to receive BK or pre-school add-on licensure. Currently, only 5 percent of North Carolina's kindergarten teachers meet this rigorous standard – a decline of 4 percentage points since 2000. Officials at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction attribute this decline to an increase in the total number of kindergarten teachers employed in the state. More teachers were needed to serve the state's growing population of kindergartners and to lead the classes created as a result of the class size reduction initiative currently being implemented across the state.

One reason this percentage is so low is that pre-school add-on licensure was established only recently and few teachers have had a chance to earn it. From this standpoint, the score is artificially depressed. Yet specific preparation to teach kindergarten children is important to track, and over the next few years, we expect that this indicator will more accurately reflect the extent to which kindergarten teachers are well-prepared to teach children during their first and pivotal year of schooling.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Safe, Orderly, and Caring Schools

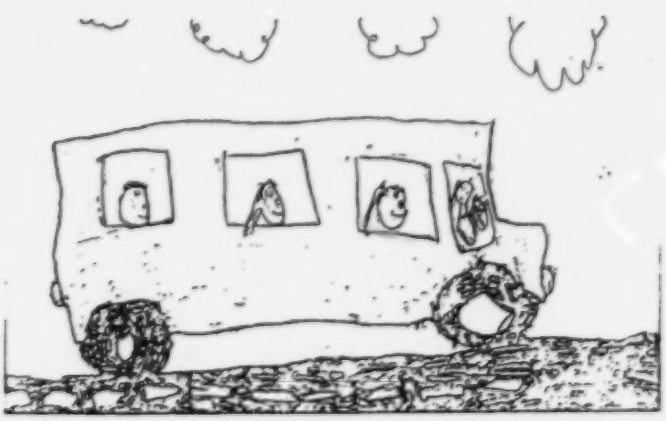
If North Carolina's schools are to be *First in America*, they must be safe, free from disruption, adequately equipped and supplied, and welcoming to students and families. Since the release of the 2000 *First in America Progress Report*, North Carolina improved its performance on the goal of providing students, teachers, and families with safe, orderly, and caring schools from a grade of 78 percent, a C+, to a grade of 81 percent, a B-. The state showed improvement in several of the priority areas within this goal.

North Carolina's schools continue to perform best on making students feel known and cared about and making families feel welcomed in their children's schools. If grades were awarded in the priority areas, North Carolina would earn an A- for knowing and caring about individual students (93 percent) and an A- for making families feel welcome (91 percent). The strong performance in these areas partly masks the state's dismal performance in providing every school with adequate facilities, equipment, and materials. If a grade were given in this priority area, North Carolina would receive a D- (63 percent). North Carolina cannot be *First in America* without addressing the serious deficits in materials, technology, equipment, and facilities reported by the state's teachers and principals.

Why is it important to be *First in America* in school safety, order, and caring? Safety and order are the top priority of parents and an essential precondition to high levels of teaching and learning (Education Week, 1999). No one can learn to his or her full potential in a chaotic classroom. Nor can teachers or students do their best work in a rundown, poorly equipped, or poorly supplied school. Effective educators also know that students stay in school and learn better when they feel that they belong there – feel that the principal and teachers know who they are and care about them as individuals. Families do more to support their children's schools and learning when they too feel known and welcomed.

FIRST IN AMERICA GRADES

	2000	2001
SAFE, ORDERLY, AND CARING SCHOOLS	**C+**	**B-**
Every School Free of Drugs, Weapons, and Disruption	78%	78%
Every School with Adequate Facilities and Materials	56%	63%
Every Student Known and Cared For	90%	93%
Every Family Welcomed	89%	91%



Connor Rowe, First Grade, Brassfield Elementary School, Raleigh, NC

SAFE, ORDERLY, AND CARING SCHOOLS

TARGETS | INDICATORS | SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK

Changes: ⇧ North Carolina's score was significantly better. / ⇩ North Carolina's score was significantly worse. / ⇔ Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant. / * On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.

EVERY SCHOOL FREE OF DRUGS, WEAPONS, AND DISRUPTION

- NC will be among the top 5 states in freedom from drugs, weapons, violence, and teacher victimization by students

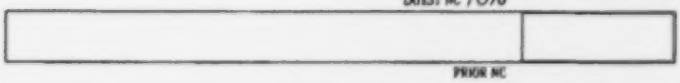
Incidence of drugs, weapons, and violence in NC's schools*

	Latest NC Score	Prior NC Score	Change	NC Rank	US Average	Target Score	First
% of students offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property last year.*	30%	29%	⇔	Tied for 9th	32%	24%	[illegible]
% of students carrying a weapon on school property during the last 30 days*	9%	14%	⇧	Tied for 3rd	10%	8%	8% (HI,MS)
% of students threatened or injured at school during the last year.*	8%	10%	⇔	Tied for 11th	8%	6%	5% (NJ)
% of students involved in a physical fight on school property during the last year.*	13%--	15%	⇔	Tied for 1st	16%	12%	12% (NC,RI)
% of teachers who report being threatened or attacked in their school.*	19%	N/A	N/A	Tied for 45th	15%	9%	8% (MI, SD)

LEGEND

- o *New or updated data are provided for this indicator and are discussed in the subsequent section.*
- * *On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.*
- Latest NC Score: *This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the most recent data collection available. Most recent data collection dates range from 1990 to 2000.*
- Prior NC Score: *This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the preceding data collection.*
- Change: *Change arrows show North Carolina's progress from the last data collection to the most recent data collection.*
  - ⇧ *North Carolina's score is significantly better.*
  - ⇩ *North Carolina's score is significantly worse.*
  - ⇔ *Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change is not significant.*
- NC Rank: *North Carolina's rank among states for which data are available. States are ranked from best to worst.*
- US Average: *This is the average score for the United States taken from the most recent data collection available.*
- Target Score: *This is the score North Carolina currently needs to achieve to reach the First in America target.*
- First: *The score and state abbreviation is listed for the state receiving the best reported score.*

EVERY SCHOOL FREE OF DRUGS, WEAPONS, AND DISRUPTION



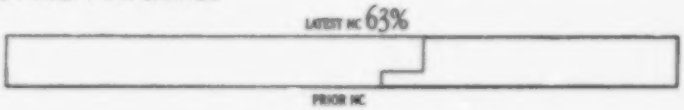
Because new cross-state information on student offenses will not be available until the summer of 2002, we cannot report on North Carolina's progress in becoming one of the nation's top five states in freedom from drugs, weapons, and disruption over the past year. However, data collected within North Carolina does shed some light on the state's recent performance on this priority.

North Carolina data are collected by the Department of Public Instruction and published in the *Annual Report on School Crime and Violence* (Public Schools of North Carolina, Division of School Improvement, Alternative and Safe Schools/Instructional Support Section, 2001). As in prior reports, the most frequently reported offenses in the 2000-01 school year were possession of a weapon, possession of a controlled substance, and assault on school personnel. The 2000-01 report revealed a 4 percentage point increase in weapon possessions and a 12 percentage point increase in possessions of a controlled substance. Over the same 1-year period, the number of staff victims decreased by more than 6 percent and the number of student victims declined by almost 9 percent.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK
Changes: ↑ North Carolina's score was significantly better. / ↓ North Carolina's score was significantly worse. / ↔ Between North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant. / * On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.		
EVERY SCHOOL WITH ADEQUATE FACILITIES AND MATERIALS		
• Nine of 10 NC teachers will report that facilities, equipment, and materials are adequate for instructional purposes.	○ Percentage of teachers reporting that facilities, equipment, and materials are adequate for instructional purposes	LATEST NC SCORE: 48% · PRIOR NC SCORE: 40% · CHANGE: ↑
• NC schools will rank among the top 10 states in access to technology.	○ Students per Internet-connected computer*	LATEST NC SCORE: 11 · PRIOR NC SCORE: 25 · CHANGE: ↑ · NC RANK: Tied for 45th · US AVERAGE: 8 · TARGET SCORE: 6 · RANK: 5 (AK,DE,HI, OH,SD,WY)
	○ Percentage of schools where at least half of teachers use a computer daily for planning and/or teaching	LATEST NC SCORE: 76% · PRIOR NC SCORE: 72% · CHANGE: ↑ · NC RANK: Tied for 28th · US AVERAGE: 76% · TARGET SCORE: 84% · RANK: 93% (AK)

EVERY SCHOOL WITH ADEQUATE FACILITIES AND MATERIALS



As in 2000, the state's performance on this priority is the lowest in the *First in America* reports. North Carolina's scores improved only slightly, from a failing grade of 56 percent in 2000 to a D- or 63 percent in 2001. There are two clear weaknesses in this priority area: the adequacy of facilities, equipment, and materials as rated by teachers in the state and the ratio of students per Internet-connected computer. The 2000-01 *Statewide School Facilities Needs Survey* recently issued by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction confirms teachers' ratings. There are $6.2 billion in construction needs facing schools over the next five years (Public Schools of North Carolina, Financial and Business Services, School Support, School Planning Section, 2001). Without an ambitious plan to meet these pressing needs, North Carolina will not achieve its *First in America* targets.

UPDATED OR NEW DATA FOR 2001:

- ○ PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS REPORTING THAT FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND MATERIALS ARE ADEQUATE FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES
- ○ STUDENTS PER INTERNET-CONNECTED COMPUTER*
- ○ PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS WHERE AT LEAST HALF OF THE TEACHERS USE A COMPUTER DAILY FOR PLANNING AND/OR TEACHING

Nine of 10 NC teachers will report that facilities, equipment, and materials are adequate for instructional purposes.

PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS REPORTING THAT FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND MATERIALS ARE ADEQUATE FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PURPOSES

North Carolina has made substantial improvement in providing adequate facilities and materials, but still has a long way to go to reach the *First in America* target. The percentage of teachers who reported that facilities, equipment, and materials are adequate increased from 40 percent in 2000 to 48 percent in 2001. A higher percentage of teachers, 56 percent, agreed or strongly agreed with the summary statement, "Overall, this school has adequate materials, equipment, classrooms, and other facilities for me to do a good job teaching students." Yet even this figure is far from the target of 90 percent.

Teachers' satisfaction with particular elements of the equipment and materials in their schools varied considerably. At the highest end of the spectrum, 75 percent agreed or strongly agreed that their "school has computers, VCRs, and other instructional equipment available as needed by the staff." Teachers were least satisfied with equipment for student use, with only 21 percent satisfied with science labs and only 23 percent reporting that they had an adequate supply of classroom computers.

THE FIRST IN AMERICA 2001 SURVEYS

In the spring of 2000, we commissioned The Georgia State Applied Research Center to conduct a series of statewide surveys of representative samples of parents, the public, teachers, and principals. In 2001 we asked Georgia State to repeat the surveys with comparable samples of parents, teachers, and principals. With two years of data, we are able to track changes in the perceptions of each of these stakeholders about important issues facing North Carolina's schools.

More information on the *First in America* surveys is available on the *First in America* website at www.firstinamerica.northcarolina.edu.

Related Information and Perspectives

Principals shared the concerns of teachers about the adequacy of facilities, equipment, and materials in their schools. Only 53 percent agreed or strongly agreed that these were adequate in their schools. In addition, only 23 percent reported that their science labs were adequate, and only 26 percent believed that they had an adequate supply of classroom computers. The only notable difference in principal and teacher responses involved the availability of materials. While three-fourths of principals (75 percent) believed materials to be adequate, only about half of teachers (53 percent) agreed.

NC schools will rank among the top 10 states in access to technology.

STUDENTS PER INTERNET-CONNECTED COMPUTER*

Since 1999, North Carolina has substantially reduced the number of students per Internet-connected computer – from 25 to 11 students. While North Carolina has improved its performance rather dramatically, it has been difficult to keep pace with the progress of other states. North Carolina's rank has improved only slightly from 48th to 45th. To become one of the top ten states, North Carolina would currently need to reduce its ratio to 6 students per Internet-connected computer. If the current rate of national progress continues, this ratio is likely to be even lower by 2010. Alaska, Delaware, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wyoming continue to lead the way with 5 students per computer.

PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS WHERE AT LEAST HALF OF THE TEACHERS USE A COMPUTER DAILY FOR PLANNING AND/OR TEACHING

Rates of teacher computer use in North Carolina remained steady between 2000 and 2001, yet the state's national ranking declined from 22nd to 28th as other states continued to make significant progress. The percentage of North Carolina schools where at least half of the teachers reported using a computer daily increased from 72 percent to 76 percent, but this increase was not statistically significant. To reach its current target, North Carolina must increase teacher computer usage by 8 percentage points. However, this target has continued to rise steadily and even higher use rates are likely to be required to be among the top ten states in 2010.

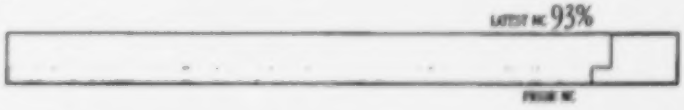
Dramatic improvement on this indicator – though not on our ranking – may be easier than it appears. In two years, Rhode Island increased its teacher computer usage from 62 percent to 91 percent. Iowa made similar gains – increasing daily usage from 73 to 91 percent.

Related Information and Perspectives

North Carolina's plan for increasing student and teacher computer access is set forth in the *North Carolina Educational Technology Plan for 2001-2005* (Public Schools of North Carolina, Division of Education Technologies, 2000). The plan calls for a continuous funding program to provide at least one teacher workstation and four multimedia computers per classroom. This plan has not yet been fully implemented or fully funded – making it difficult for North Carolina to reach the *First in America* targets.

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK
Changes: ↑ North Carolina's score was significantly better. / ↓ North Carolina's score was significantly worse. / ↔ Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant. / * On the indicator a lower score is better; a higher score is worse.		
EVERY STUDENT KNOWN AND CARED FOR		
• The average size of NC kindergarten through 3rd grade classes will not exceed 18 students.	o Average size of classes in kindergarten through 3rd grade*	KINDERGARTEN: 20 / 1ST GRADE: 20 / 2ND GRADE: 20 / 3RD GRADE: 21 / TARGET SCORE K-3: 18
• NC will be among the top 10 states in reducing chronic absenteeism.	o Percentage of 8th graders missing 3 or more days of school during the last month*	LATEST NC SCORE: 18% / PRIOR NC SCORE: 22% / CHANGE: ↑ / NC RANK: Tied for 11th / US AVERAGE: 10% / TARGET SCORE: 17% / FIRST: 15% (DC/SD)
• Nine of 10 parents will say that their child is known and cared about as an individual in school.	o Percentage of parents who report that their child is known and cared about as an individual by his/her teachers and principal	LATEST NC SCORE: 85% / PRIOR NC SCORE: 79% / CHANGE: ↑

EVERY STUDENT KNOWN AND CARED FOR



How well students are known and cared for is difficult to measure, but we can look at the size of classes, the rates of chronic absenteeism, and parents' perceptions of their child's relationship with school staff as indicators. Since 2000, North Carolina improved its already impressive performance on this priority by 3 percentage points – from 90 percent to 93 percent. The state performed well on each of the three measures used to assess whether its students feel known and cared for in school.

UPDATED OR NEW DATA FOR 2001:

- O AVERAGE SIZE OF CLASSES IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 3RD GRADE*
- O PERCENTAGE OF 8TH GRADERS MISSING 3 OR MORE DAYS OF SCHOOL DURING THE LAST MONTH*
- O PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS WHO REPORT THAT THEIR CHILD IS KNOWN AND CARED ABOUT AS AN INDIVIDUAL BY HIS/HER TEACHERS AND PRINCIPAL

The average size of NC kindergarten through third grade classes will not exceed 18 students.

AVERAGE SIZE OF CLASSES IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH 3RD GRADE*

The initial *First in America* reports measured the percentage of 4th and 8th graders in classes of 25 or fewer. This indicator was selected to take advantage of the only comparative cross-state data available on class size – data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). NAEP provides these data only for the 4th and 8th grades. While these comparative data are useful, the research evidence in support of smaller classes is strongest for grades kindergarten through 3 (Glass & Smith, 1998).

In light of this research evidence and to better track the state's progress on its newly implemented K-3 class size reduction initiative, the Education Cabinet has adjusted its class size measure and target. We will now report the average size of North Carolina classes in kindergarten through 3rd grade. The Education Cabinet has set the target of achieving an average class size of 18 in kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades. This target is consistent with a broad body of research that finds that while there may not be an ideal class size number, only when classes drop about this low do large learning benefits appear and last into subsequent grades (Word et al., 1990; Finn, Gerber, Achilles & Boyd-Zaharias, 2000). Smaller classes also reduce disruptions and the amount of time spent on discipline, promoting a more orderly classroom learning environment (Achilles, 1994; Egelson, Harman & Achilles, 1996; Molnar et al., 1999).

For the 2001-02 school year, North Carolina has an average class size of 20 students in kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades and 21 students in 3rd grade. The current average kindergarten class size may well decrease during the school year as a result of the class size reduction funds included in the 2001-03 state budget. The budget implements the first stage of Governor Mike Easley's class size reduction initiative by providing funds to reduce kindergarten class size to 19 students in the 2001-02 school year and to 18 students in the 2002-03 school year. This policy represents an important first step in achieving the *First in America* target. However, the state's students will not reap the benefits of this reduction and the state will not achieve the *First in America* target if the next phases of the reduction are not funded to include 1st, 2nd, and 3rd graders. Research is clear that in order to make enduring gains, students must be in smaller classes for at least 2 years (Finn et al., 2000).

NC will be among the top 10 states in reducing chronic absenteeism.

PERCENTAGE OF 8TH GRADERS MISSING 3 OR MORE DAYS OF SCHOOL DURING THE LAST MONTH*

The percentage of North Carolina's 8th graders who were chronically absent from school declined by 4 percentage points between 1998 and 2000. In 2000, 18 percent of the state's 8th graders missed 3 or more days of school during the month before the survey was conducted.

More information on the *2001 First in America Principals' Survey* is available on the *First in America* website at www.firstinamerica.northcarolina.edu

Despite this improvement, North Carolina has not kept pace with the progress of other states. The state's ranking slipped from 9th to 11th – tied with eight other states. It may take considerable effort for North Carolina to move out of the pack to a significantly lower absenteeism rate. State absenteeism rates tend to cluster between 16 and 20 percent, with 24 of the 40 participating states falling within this range. In fact, the top performing states in the nation, Indiana and North Dakota, scarcely outperformed this cluster with a rate of 15 percent. Moving even a few percentage points will be difficult.

Frequent absences from school obviously cut down on a student's opportunity to learn. But a pattern of frequent absences may also reflect a child's feeling of disconnection from school – a sense that no one really knows the child and wants him or her there. Many future high school dropouts have exhibited a pattern of absenteeism in the 8th grade (Roderick, 1993).

Nine out of 10 parents will say that their child is known and cared about as an individual in school.

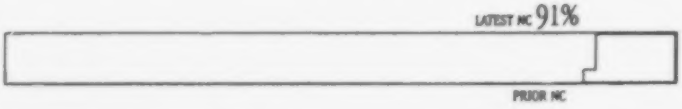
PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS WHO REPORT THAT THEIR CHILD IS KNOWN AND CARED ABOUT AS AN INDIVIDUAL BY HIS/HER TEACHERS AND PRINCIPAL

North Carolina has moved very close to reaching its *First in America* target with 85 percent of parents stating that their child is known and cared for as an individual in school – an increase of 6 percentage points since 2000. Eighty-four percent (84 percent) of parents agreed that teachers in their "child's school really seem to care about the students" and that "their child feels cared about in school." Responses to the third question, "the staff at my child's school make my child look forward to going to school," lagged a bit with 74 percent of parents agreeing or strongly agreeing. This may simply reflect the difficulty of encouraging any child to look forward to going to school. The latest North Carolina score is based on the responses of 779 parents statewide to the *2001 First in America Parent Survey*. In order to be included in our percentage, parents had to agree or strongly agree with two of the three statements.

No significant differences were detected in the responses of parents from varying income levels, educational backgrounds, or racial/ethnic groups. By parents' own reports, North Carolina's schools are responsive to the needs of many students and families, regardless of their background.

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK
Changes: ↑ North Carolina's score was significantly better. / ↓ North Carolina's score was significantly worse. / ↔ Interprets North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant. / * On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.		
EVERY FAMILY WELCOMED		
• Nine of 10 families will say they feel welcomed and encouraged to participate in their children's schools.	○ Percentage of families who feel welcomed and encouraged to participate in their child's school	LATEST NC SCORE: 82% / PRIOR NC SCORE: 80% / CHANGE: ↔

EVERY FAMILY WELCOMED



If grades were awarded in each of the priority areas, North Carolina would receive an A- or 91 percent for its efforts to welcome families into their children's schools. Research has shown that parents' involvement in their children's education can have a considerable effect on their children's motivation and school performance (Ballen and Moles, 1994). Schools' efforts to welcome and encourage families can, in turn, have a significant impact on parents' level of involvement. North Carolina is close to achieving the target in this area.

UPDATED OR NEW DATA FOR 2001:

○ PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES WHO FEEL WELCOMED AND ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR CHILD'S SCHOOL

Nine of 10 families will say they feel welcomed and encouraged to participate in their children's schools.

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES WHO FEEL WELCOMED AND ENCOURAGED TO PARTICIPATE IN THEIR CHILD'S SCHOOL

This year, 82 percent of North Carolina's families responded that they feel welcomed and encouraged to participate in their child's school. While this is not a statistically significant increase since the 2000 score of 80 percent, it is quite close to the nine in 10 target. In order to be included in the reported percentage, parents had to agree or strongly agree with three of the following four statements: "when I have a concern about my child, I can count on the school for support;" "I feel comfortable visiting my child's school," "if I call the school, I receive courteous service;" and, "it's easy to contact teachers at my child's school."

While the state performed well on each of the four questions, responses were slightly lower for two of the statements. About three-fourths of families (77 percent) agreed with the statements, "when I have a concern about my child, I can count on the school for support" and "it's easy to contact teachers at my child's school." If North Carolina schools can improve further in these two areas, the state is likely to reach the *First in America* target.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Quality Teachers and Administrators

North Carolina's grade on this goal and its performance on the priority areas within it have remained virtually unchanged since 2000. Again this year North Carolina has received a grade of B- (83 percent) on this goal. If we assigned grades for the priorities within the goal, North Carolina would again earn a B (87 percent) for its efforts to recruit and retain competent, caring, and qualified teachers, a B (84 percent) on measures of the quality of principal leadership in the state, and a C+ (78 percent) for its efforts to provide a supportive working environment for teachers and administrators in every school.

Among the strengths in this goal area are performance on national teacher and principal examinations, the percentage of teachers attaining licensure, the number of National Board Certified teachers employed in the state, and on the allocation of education expenditures to support instruction. Yet in order to achieve the *First in America* goal of providing high quality teachers and administrators for every student in the state, North Carolina must increase the percentage of teachers assigned to teach in the field in which they are licensed, teachers' ratings of the quality of professional development in which they participate, the percentage of teachers with master's degrees, teachers' ratings of the leadership skills of their principals, and teachers' and principals' ratings of the working conditions in their schools.

FIRST IN AMERICA GRADES

	2000	2001
QUALITY TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS	**B-**	**B-**
Every Teacher Competent, Caring, and Qualified	87%	87%
Every Principal a Leader	85%	84%
Every School a Good Place to Work and Learn	78%	78%

QUALITY TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

TARGETS | INDICATORS | SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK

Change: ⬆ North Carolina's score was significantly better. / ⬇ North Carolina's score was significantly worse. / ⬌ Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant. / * On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.

EVERY TEACHER COMPETENT, CARING, AND QUALIFIED

- NC teachers will score at or above the national average on teacher examinations.
  - o Average examination scores of NC teachers

PRAXIS CONTENT KNOWLEDGE EXAMINATIONS:

	LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	US AVERAGE:
	171	167	⬆	172

PRAXIS PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING AND TEACHING EXAMINATION:

	LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	US AVERAGE:
GRADES K-6	175	174	⬆	174
GRADES 5-9	172	172	⬌	172
GRADES 7-12	176	175	⬆	176

- NC will be among the top 10 states in the percentage of teachers who are fully licensed.
  - Percentage of teachers meeting licensure requirements

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
93%	75%	⬆	Tied for 26th	92%	96%	99% (ID, WY)

- NC will be one of the top 10 states in the percentage of teachers teaching in their field.
  - Percentage of secondary teachers teaching in the field in which they are licensed

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
66%	68%	⬌	Tied for 22nd	63%	72%	81% (MD)

- Nine of 10 NC teachers will engage in high quality professional development.
  - o Percentage of teachers who report that they have participated in high quality professional development

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
59%	57%	⬌

- NC will continue to lead the nation in the number of National Board Certified Teachers.
  - o Number of teachers attaining National Board Certification

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
3660	1262	⬆	1st	N/A	3660	3660 (NC)

- NC will be one of the top 10 states in the percentage of teachers with master's degrees.
  - Percentage of teachers with master's degrees

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
36%	37%	⬌	40th	47%	56%	80% (CT)

- 95 percent of NC teachers will remain in their teaching position from one year to the next.
  - o Percentage of teachers who remain in their teaching position from one year to the next

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
86%	87%	⬇

LEGEND

o *New or updated data are provided for this indicator and are discussed in the subsequent section.*

* *On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.*

Latest NC Score: *This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the most recent data collection available. Most recent data collection dates range from 1998 to 2000.*

Prior NC Score: *This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the preceding data collection.*

Change: *Change arrows show North Carolina's progress from the last data collection to the most recent data collection.*

- ⬆ *North Carolina's score is significantly better.*
- ⬇ *North Carolina's score is significantly worse.*
- ⬌ *Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change is not significant.*

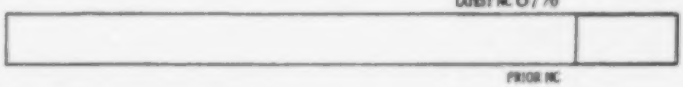
NC Rank: *North Carolina's rank among states for which data are available. States are ranked from best to worst.*

US Average: *This is the average score for the United States taken from the most recent data collection available.*

Target Score: *This is the score North Carolina currently needs to achieve to reach the First in America target.*

First: *The score and state abbreviation is listed for the state receiving the best reported score.*

EVERY TEACHER COMPETENT, CARING, AND QUALIFIED



Providing a competent, caring, and qualified teacher to every student in North Carolina is essential if we are to achieve the goal of leading the nation in education quality. There is broad consensus among education policymakers and researchers that teachers' knowledge, know-how, and commitment are among the most important factors in determining how well students learn. In fact, states with the most highly qualified teachers and with a history of investing in improving teachers' qualifications frequently lead the nation in student achievement.

Measured by the *First in America* indicators for competent, caring, and qualified teachers, North Carolina is performing well. The state is 87 percent of the way to the targets in this priority area. The state's impressive performance on the Praxis national teacher examinations, the percentage of teachers attaining licensure, and its top rank in the number of National Board Certified Teachers account for the high performance on this priority. Continued improvement will require improvement in teachers' professional development and in the percentage of teachers with master's degrees.

UPDATED OR NEW DATA FOR 2001:

- AVERAGE EXAMINATION SCORES OF NC TEACHERS
- PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS WHO REPORT THAT THEY HAVE PARTICIPATED IN HIGH QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
- NUMBER OF TEACHERS ATTAINING NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION
- PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS WHO REMAIN IN THEIR TEACHING POSITION FROM ONE YEAR TO THE NEXT

NC teachers will score at or above the national average on teacher examinations.

AVERAGE EXAMINATION SCORES OF NC TEACHERS

A complex mix of Praxis subject matter exams are administered to new teachers seeking licensure in North Carolina in order to measure how well they know the subject matter that they are trained to teach. Praxis exams allow state officials to compare the knowledge of prospective North Carolina teachers with other teachers from around the country.

Here we report the composite results of a dozen selected "content knowledge" examinations in core academic areas (English, mathematics, sciences, social studies, and Spanish). In 1999-2000, 3,796 prospective North Carolina teachers took these twelve exams and received a median score of 171 out of 200 points – an increase of 4 points since 1998-99. The North Carolina median was 1 point below the median score of the more than 55,000 teachers who took these examinations nationwide.

In 1999-2000, North Carolina also required prospective teachers to take the *Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching* (PLT) examination at one of 3 grade levels, K-6, 5-9, or 7-12. This exam is designed to gauge a teachers' knowledge about teaching and a variety of essential job-related tasks.

The scores for North Carolina test takers are at or slightly above the national median at all 3 grade levels tested. At the K-6 grade level, the median score of North Carolina teachers was 175 and the United States median score was 174. At grades 5-9, both North Carolina teachers' median score and the United States median score were 172. Teachers in North Carolina and the United States received a median score of 176 at grades 7-12. Overall, North Carolina's results are only slightly improved from the previous year. The median score of prospective teachers at the K-6 and 7-12 grade levels rose by one point. At the 5-9 grade level, North Carolina's scores remained unchanged since 1998-99.

New North Carolina teachers have achieved or exceeded the *First in America* target of scoring at or above the national average on each of the Praxis PLT examinations. The composite score from the content knowledge exams taken by North Carolina teachers must improve by 1 point to meet the target – the national average – for this indicator.

Nine of 10 NC teachers will engage in high quality professional development.

PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS WHO REPORT THAT THEY HAVE PARTICIPATED IN HIGH QUALITY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The *First in America* target is for 90 percent of North Carolina teachers to report that they have participated in high quality professional development during the previous year. The results from the *2001 First in America Teachers' Survey* show that the state is far from meeting this standard. By our decision rule, only about 59 percent of the state's teachers reported participating in high quality professional development last year. This score represents only a slight, yet statistically significant, improvement from the 2000 score of 57 percent.

To be counted as reporting that he or she had participated in high quality professional development, our 1162 responding teachers had to say that their professional development experiences showed at least five of seven characteristics of high quality professional development to a moderate or great extent. We asked teachers whether the professional development supported by their school:

- was planned according to school needs,
- was aligned with high standards,
- was useful for helping students to achieve high standards,
- was part of an ongoing, integrated professional development program,
- provided strategies to apply in the classroom,
- provided follow-up activities, and
- provided networking opportunities.

While the composite results remained as low in 2001 as in 2000, a majority of teachers in both surveys reported that the professional development supported by their school was planned according to school needs (74 percent), provided classroom strategies (72 percent), was aligned with high standards (77 percent), and was useful for helping students achieve high standards (73 percent).

But just as in 2000, responses on the 2001 survey were less promising when teachers were asked whether their school had an integrated professional development program (65 percent), whether follow-up activities were provided (52 percent), and where networking opportunities were offered (41 percent). It is in these areas that professional development in North Carolina continues to need upgrading.

The teacher professional development supported by North Carolina's schools will have to improve sharply to meet the *First in America* target by 2010. Improvement will be needed across all seven features of good learning experiences for teachers. But the greatest needs are for more coherent, integrated programs that include opportunities to share information and ideas and to learn from colleagues within the school as well as from beyond the school and district.

NC will continue to lead the nation in the number of National Board Certified Teachers.

NUMBER OF TEACHERS ATTAINING NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION

The *First in America* target on this measure is to lead the nation in the number of teachers with National Board Certification. Again this year, North Carolina has achieved this target. Between 1999 and 2001, the number of National Board Certified Teachers in North Carolina increased from 1,262 to 3,660. North Carolina continues to lead its next closest competitor, Florida, by 1,405 teachers.

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) has created an extensive assessment process based on a combination of research about teaching, the professional judgment of good teachers, and technically sound measurement procedures. Candidates for certification examine their classroom teaching and the work of their students and undergo a full-day assessment of their subject matter knowledge and their knowledge about teaching.

North Carolina has taken several important steps to encourage teachers to undertake National Board assessment. The state pays the assessment fee, has established a support network for candidates for certification, and provides a 12 percent salary increase for all teachers who successfully complete the program. As a result almost one-fourth of all National Board Certified teachers in the nation are teaching in North Carolina.

95 percent of NC teachers will remain in their teaching position from one year to the next.

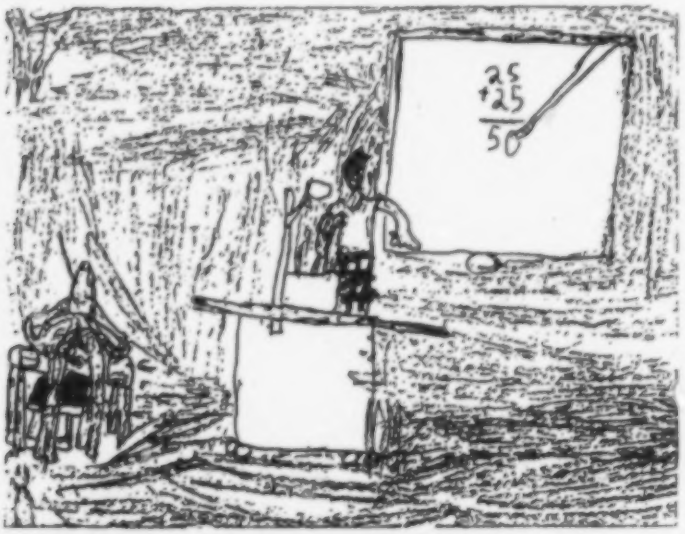
PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS WHO REMAIN IN THEIR TEACHING POSITION FROM ONE YEAR TO THE NEXT

Keeping good teachers is important for many reasons. North Carolina is facing a severe and worsening teacher shortage brought about by high teacher attrition rates, an aging population of teachers, and booming student enrollments. The state will be unable to meet its future needs without increasing retention rates. Rapid teacher turnover tends to depress students' test scores – particularly in schools serving high percentages of poor and minority students where turnover is highest. Finally, studies indicate that a teacher's effectiveness grows steadily throughout his or her first 10 years of experience. For all of these reasons, a stable teaching force will be essential to achieving the goals of *First in America*.

The *First in America* target is for North Carolina schools to retain 95 percent of their teachers from one year to the next. From 1999-2000 to 2000-01, only 86 percent of the state's teachers continued to teach in their school district – down from 87 percent in the previous year.

In 2000-01, the 117 school systems in North Carolina reported that 12,610 of the 90,507 teachers employed during the school year left their systems. District turnover rates ranged from a high of 31 percent to a low of 2 percent. The majority of teachers who left their positions reported that they did so for three reasons:

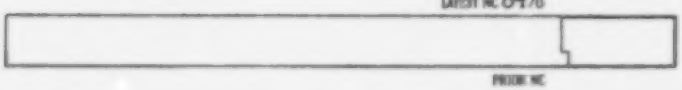
- Nineteen percent (19 percent) accepted teaching positions in other districts, other states, or in charter or private schools
- Sixteen percent (16 percent) retired; and
- Fourteen percent (14 percent) resigned due to a family relocation.



Nicole Berriman, First Grade, Brassfield Elementary School, Raleigh, NC

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK			
EVERY PRINCIPAL A LEADER					
• NC principals will score at or above the national average on principal examinations.	o Average examination scores of NC principals	SCHOOL LEADERS LICENSURE ASSESSMENT:	LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	US AVERAGE:
			177	177	◆▶	176
• Nine of 10 teachers and parents will agree that their principal demonstrates characteristics of effective leadership.	o Teacher and parent perceptions of their principal's leadership		LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	
		TEACHERS	51%	48%	◆▶	
		PARENTS	72%	74%	◆▶	

EVERY PRINCIPAL A LEADER



Principal leadership has long been recognized as a key to school performance. The *First in America* reports monitor progress in this priority area by examining the performance of principals on the School Leaders Licensure Assessment, a national examination for aspiring principals, and the judgment of teachers and parents about the performance of the principal in their school.

The "scores" are mixed. As in 2000, new North Carolina principals surpass the national average on the test for beginning principals, and parents consider their principals to be effective leaders. But by the standard we set to count a teacher as deeming his or her principal effective, teachers gave only about half of their principals (51 percent) a favorable rating – showing no improvement since 2000. Across these measures, principals' performance level is at about 84 percent of the target levels set in the *First in America* reports.

UPDATED OR NEW DATA FOR 2001:

O AVERAGE EXAMINATION SCORES OF NC PRINICPALS

O TEACHER AND PARENT PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP

NC principals will score above the national average on principal examinations.

AVERAGE EXAMINATION SCORES OF NC PRINCIPALS

Beginning principals in North Carolina are required to pass the *School Leaders Licensure Assessment* (SLLA). The six-hour assessment requires test-takers to read and respond to vignettes, cases, and documents that focus on issues involving curriculum and instruction as well as supervision, management, school law, and safety concerns.

The *First in America* target is for principals to score at or above the national median on the SLLA principal examination. As in last year's report, North Carolina has met its *First in America* target. In 1999-2000, prospective North Carolina principals received a median score of 177 – unchanged since 1998-99. This score surpassed the 1999-2000 United States median of 176.

Nine of 10 NC teachers and parents will agree that their principal demonstrates characteristics of effective leadership.

TEACHER AND PARENT PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP

The *First in America* reports also measure principal leadership by asking teachers and parents their perceptions of the principal at the school where they work or which their child attends. Through consultation with an expert panel of current and former principals, superintendents, teachers, university officials, and non-profit leaders, we defined fourteen important behaviors and characteristics of principal leadership.

Respondents to the *2001 First in America Teachers' Survey* had to agree or agree strongly with 12 of 14 statements of these behaviors and characteristics to be counted as saying that his or her principal demonstrates effective leadership. An effective principal leader:

- leads the development of the school's vision,
- uses the school vision to guide day-to-day decisions,
- treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect,
- leads the development of programs to meet the needs of all students,
- accurately identifies barriers to student learning,
- promotes professional development that focuses on improving student learning,
- is visible and involved in the school and its activities,
- is accessible to teachers in the school,
- communicates well with a variety of audiences inside and outside of the school,
- solves problems and conflicts effectively,
- recruits and works to keep a high quality work force,
- uses resources (for example, money, materials, and people) where they matter most,
- uses data to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school's instructional programs, and
- uses multiple sources of data (for example, student absenteeism, dropout rates, and parental input) to measure school performance.

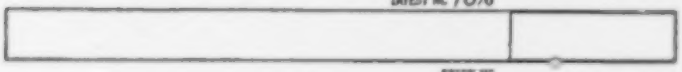
We asked parents to comment only on those four behaviors or characteristics that they would be in a position to observe directly. These included the items about fairness and respect, visibility and involvement, communication with parents, and problem solving. To be counted as saying that their principal demonstrates effective leadership, parents had to agree or agree strongly with 3 of the 4 statements.

The target for this indicator is that 9 of 10 teachers and parents will report that their principal demonstrates effective leadership. North Carolina's scores were unchanged since 2000 – leaving considerable room for improvement before the state reaches its target. Just over half (51 percent) of teachers agreed or agreed strongly with at least 12 of the 14 statements. Seventy-two percent (72 percent) of parents agreed or agreed strongly with at least 3 of the 4 statements about which they were asked.

Responses to individual items from the *2001 Teachers' Survey* remained largely unchanged since 2000. Approximately 75 percent of teachers rated their principal favorably on his or her development of the school's vision, promotion of professional development that focuses on improving student learning, visibility and involvement in their school and its activities, accessibility to teachers in this school, and use of data to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the school's instructional programs. Principals made the most significant gain on their use of multiple sources of data to measure school performance. Eighty-six percent (86 percent) of teachers rated their principal favorably on this measure in 2001, compared with 72 percent in 2000. Responses to all items from the *2001 Parents' Survey* remained unchanged since 2000.

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK
EVERY SCHOOL A GOOD PLACE TO WORK AND LEARN		
• Nine of 10 teachers and administrators will say that their school is a good place to work and learn.	o Teacher and administrator perceptions of their work environment	TEACHERS: LATEST NC SCORE 30% / PRIOR NC SCORE 38% / CHANGE ↓ PRINCIPALS: LATEST NC SCORE 57% / PRIOR NC SCORE 57% / CHANGE ◆▶
• NC schools will rank among the top 10 states in the percentage of the annual education expenditures allocated to instruction.	o Percentage of annual education expenditures allocated to instruction	LATEST NC SCORE 63% / PRIOR NC SCORE 63% / CHANGE ◆▶ / NC RANK Tied for 11th / US AVERAGE 62% / TARGET SCORE 66% / PARITY 68% (#9)
• NC will rank in the top 10 states in teacher compensation.	o Average salaries of NC's teachers	LATEST NC SCORE $41,167 / PRIOR NC SCORE $39,220 / CHANGE ↑ / NC RANK 39th / US AVERAGE $43,917 / TARGET SCORE $47,523 / PARITY ($53,281 (#1))

EVERY SCHOOL A GOOD PLACE TO WORK AND LEARN



Teachers and principals can do their best work only if the state, district, and school provide them with the support they need to succeed. As in 2000, the 2001 *First in America* survey revealed teachers' sharp dissatisfaction with their work environments. In particular, they expressed concerns about the support, recognition, and compensation they receive, the size of their classes, and the burdens created by excessive paperwork and inappropriate rules. Due to these concerns, North Carolina's performance on this priority did not improve between 2000 and 2001. Again this year, the state is 78 percent of the way to achieving its *First in America* targets.

UPDATED OR NEW DATA FOR 2001:

- O TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR WORK ENVIRONMENT
- O PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL EDUCATION EXPENDITURES ALLOCATED TO INSTRUCTION
- O AVERAGE SALARIES OF NC'S TEACHERS

Nine of 10 teachers and administrators will say that their school is a good place to work and learn.

TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR WORK ENVIRONMENT

To gauge the quality of schools as places to work and learn, we asked a statewide sample of over 1,100 teachers and 600 principals to respond to a series of 12 statements. These statements questioned whether staff in their school share beliefs and values and work cooperatively; whether recognition, compensation, and professional autonomy support good work; whether rules and paperwork get in the way of good work, whether class sizes and parental support are satisfactory, and whether they have adequate access to professional development and advancement opportunities. We asked principals about a set of similar statements modified to suit their role.

To be counted as saying that her or his school is a good place to work and learn, a teacher or principal had to weigh in positively on 8 out of these 12 items. Teachers' and principals' responses show that our schools do not come close to the *First in America* target – that 9 of 10 teachers and principals will say their school is a good place to work and learn. By our standard, only 30 percent of North Carolina teachers said their school is a good place to work and learn – a decline of 8 percentage points since 2000. Principals' responses remained unchanged, with 57 percent responding positively to 8 of the 12 items.

The *First in America* survey found that the areas of greatest concern for teachers were compensation, recognition and support, paperwork, and a lack of opportunities for professional development and advancement. Despite a rapid increase in the state average teacher salary, only about 36 percent of the teachers in our sample believed that their salary has improved substantially. And only about 1 in 10 (11 percent) believe they are paid on a par with others in jobs with similar education and work requirements. Teachers expressed a similar level of dissatisfaction with

the recognition and support they receive from school staff and parents. Only 61 percent responded that teachers are recognized for a job well done. And fewer than 40 percent believed that they receive a great deal of support from parents for the work they do – a dramatic decline since 2000. Responses also worsened to the question about the effect of paperwork on their teaching. Ninety-one percent of teachers responded that paperwork interferes with their teaching – 4 percentage points worse than in 2000. Just over half of teachers were also dissatisfied with their opportunities for professional advancement and professional learning or development.

On the positive side, a much larger percentage of teachers felt they were surrounded by like-minded colleagues, 86 percent in 2001 compared to 77 percent in 2000. And 83 percent of teachers believed they have the autonomy to make good classroom decisions.

More information on the *2001 First in America Principals' Survey* is available on the *First in America* website at www.firstinamerica.northcarolina.edu

Though still far from the target figure of 9 of 10, principals clearly view their work environment in a more positive light. Nearly three out of five (57 percent) saw their school as a good place to work and learn. But like teachers, principals do not feel reasonably compensated (only 22 percent agreed) and less than half feel they have made progress financially (46 percent).

Like teachers, principals responded positively to several statements. Principals felt surrounded by colleagues who share their beliefs (96 percent) and work cooperatively (91 percent). Nearly 83 percent were satisfied with their opportunities for professional development. Almost all principals are pleased with their opportunities for professional advancement (98 percent).

Despite some bright spots, North Carolina will have to make a considerable headway in improving the working conditions of teachers and principals if the state is to achieve the *First in America* target.

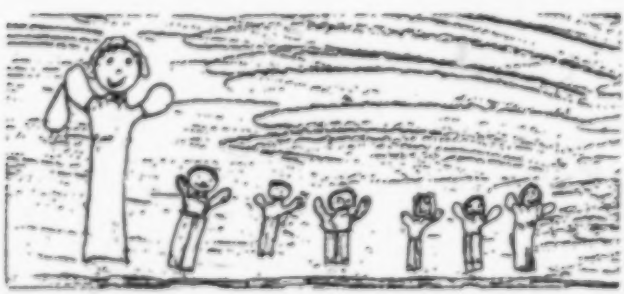
NC schools will rank among the top 10 states in the percentage of annual education expenditures allocated to instruction.

PERCENTAGE OF ANNUAL EDUCATION EXPENDITURES ALLOCATED TO INSTRUCTION

Education expenditures are typically classified into three functions – instruction, support services, and non-instructional activities. Instructional expenditures include teachers' salaries and benefits and any supplies that support instruction (e.g., textbooks). Because these expenditures are most closely related to student achievement, the Education Cabinet has committed to a goal of ranking among the top ten states in the percentage of expenditures allocated to instruction.

North Carolina is close to achieving this goal. In 1998-99, the latest year for which cross-state data is available, North Carolina devoted 63 percent of its educational expenditures to instruction. While this percentage did not change since 1997-98, the state improved its ranking from 12th to 11th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. On this measure, most states are tightly packed around the national average of 62 percent. In all states, instruction absorbs the majority of expenditures. Yet even the top state in the nation, New York, devotes no more than 68 percent of its expenditures to instructional costs.

To make it into the current top ten, North Carolina's percentage would have to reach 64 percent. Though reaching the top ten seems within sight, getting there will require a significant commitment. North Carolina spent a total of about $5 billion on public elementary and secondary schools in 1998-99. Assuming total spending remains constant, a one percent increase in spending on instruction amounts to a $50 million dollar reallocation.



Caitlin McCarl, First Grade, Brassfield Elementary School, Raleigh, NC

NC will rank in the top 10 states in teacher compensation.

AVERAGE SALARIES OF NC'S TEACHERS

Beginning in 1997, North Carolina set its sights on raising teacher salaries to the national average. At the time, North Carolina ranked 43rd in the nation with an average teacher salary $7,325 below the national average. From 1997 to 2001, the state devoted $1.2 billion in additional teacher salary expenditures to achieve this goal. The *2000 First in America Progress Report* set the state's sights even higher – to rank among the top ten states in the nation in teacher compensation.

SCHOOL YEAR	AVERAGE NC SALARY	AVERAGE NATIONAL SALARY	NC RANK
1996-97	$31, 286	$38, 611	43rd
1997-98	$33,129	$39,454	38th
1998-99	$36,898	$40,582	29th
1999-2000	$39,220	$41,179	23rd
2000-01	$41,167	$42,917	20th

Source: National Education Association

As the chart illustrates, the gap between North Carolina's average salary and the national average has shrunk steadily and North Carolina's ranking has risen sharply over the past five years. Based on National Education Association (NEA) figures for the 2000-01 school year, North Carolina has reached the rank of 20th in the nation for teacher salaries. Yet North Carolina's average teacher salary of $41,167 remains just below the United States average of $42,917. North Carolina's average salary remains over $6,000 below the present top ten salary of $47,523 and over $12,000 below the average salary of the national leader, New Jersey. Despite the progress, significant additional investments will be needed to achieve this *First in America* target.

Related Information and Perspectives

As indicated above, we used figures from the NEA in computing the state's current performance on the teacher compensation target. But the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) also collects and reports figures on teacher compensation, as well as some useful cost-of-living adjustments. The AFT has developed an index that allows us to compare what teachers make in each state once the state cost of living is taken into account. Using the cost-of-living adjustment, in 1999-2000 North Carolina paid its teachers an adjusted salary of $43,012, placing the state at 15th in the nation. For the first time, the adjusted North Carolina salary surpassed the United States average salary ($41,820). Between 1998-99 and 1999-2000, North Carolina improved its adjusted national ranking by 3 places and raised its average adjusted teacher salary by nearly $1,200.

Strong Family, Business, and Community Support

As important as schools are, they are not the only institutions that affect children's learning. Children acquire many of the foundational skills, attitudes, and values on which their education is built within their families. Businesses can make it easier for parents to get involved with their children's schools, and they can encourage their employees to serve as adult mentors to children who need additional assistance and positive role models for success. The broader community shapes both the physical and social aspects of children's growth and development. The *First in America* reports include measures of some of the ways that families, businesses, and communities contribute to children's education in North Carolina. In 2001, the state received a B (84 percent) on these measures – an increase of 4 percentage points since 2000.

The *First in America* measures of family involvement indicate that North Carolina parents have strong relationships with their children's schools and are actively involved in their children's learning. In fact, North Carolina schools and parents are 93 percent of the way to the *First in America* targets for family involvement – an increase of 1 percentage point since 2000.

On measures of community involvement in children's learning, the picture is mixed. The state has already exceeded the *First in America* target for adults serving as mentors. Yet despite considerable progress over the past year, the state remains well short of the target for employers offering opportunities for school involvement. Overall, the state would rate a B- (81 percent) on these measures of community involvement.

On measures of child health and well-being, the state would receive a grade of C+ (78 percent) – a two percentage point improvement since 2000. The state is making considerable progress in ensuring that children have access to immunizations, health care, and proper nutrition during the school year. Considerable effort is still needed to lower our high infant mortality rate, reduce tobacco usage among teens, and improve access to proper nutrition during the summer.

FIRST IN AMERICA GRADES

	2000	2001
STRONG FAMILY, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT	B-	B
Every Family Involved in their Child's Learning	92%	93%
Every Community Involved in Children's Learning	72%	81%
Every Child with Access to Quality Health Care	76%	78%

Brittany Smith, First Grade, Brassfield Elementary School, Raleigh, NC

STRONG FAMILY, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK

Changes: ⇧ North Carolina's score was significantly better. / ⇩ North Carolina's score was significantly worse. / ⇔ Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant. / * On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.

EVERY FAMILY INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILD'S LEARNING

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK
• Nine of 10 NC teachers will engage in activities that promote parental involvement.	○ Percentage of teachers who actively promote parental involvement	OFFERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS TO VOLUNTEER — LATEST NC SCORE: 88% — PRIOR NC SCORE: 90% — CHANGE: ⇔ COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS — LATEST NC SCORE: 79% — PRIOR NC SCORE: 70% — CHANGE: ⇧
• Nine of 10 parents will take steps to support their child's learning.	○ Percentage of parents who actively support their child's learning at school and at home	PARENTAL DEVELOPMENT IN THEIR CHILD'S SCHOOL — LATEST NC SCORE: 62% — PRIOR NC SCORE: 64% — CHANGE: ⇔ PARENTAL SUPPORT FOR THEIR CHILD'S LEARNING AT HOME 89% — PRIOR NC SCORE: 90% — CHANGE: ⇔
• NC will be one of the nation's top 10 states in family support for homework.	○ Percentage of students who discuss their studies at home daily	% OF 4TH GRADERS REPORTING THEY DISCUSSED STUDIES AT HOME DAILY: — LATEST NC SCORE: 58% — PRIOR NC SCORE: 56% — CHANGE: ⇔ — NC RANK: Tied for 4th — US AVERAGE: 52% — TARGET SCORE: 57% — FIRST: 61%(DC) % OF 8TH GRADERS REPORTING THEY DISCUSSED STUDIES AT HOME DAILY: — LATEST NC SCORE: 42% — PRIOR NC SCORE: 40% — CHANGE: ⇔ — NC RANK: Tied for 5th — US AVERAGE: 38% — TARGET SCORE: 42% — FIRST: 45%(DC)

LEGEND

○ *New or updated data are provided for this indicator and are discussed in the subsequent section.*

* *On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.*

Latest NC Score: *This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the most recent data collection available. Most recent data collection dates range from 1990 to 2000.*

Prior NC Score: *This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the preceding data collection.*

Change: *Change arrows show North Carolina's progress from the last data collection to the most recent data collection.*

⇧ *North Carolina's score is significantly better.*

⇩ *North Carolina's score is significantly worse.*

⇔ *Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change is not significant.*

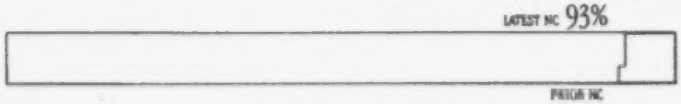
NC Rank: *North Carolina's rank among states for which data are available. States are ranked from best to worst.*

US Average: *This is the average score for the United States taken from the most recent data collection available.*

Target Score: *This is the score North Carolina currently needs to achieve to reach the First in America target.*

First: *The score and state abbreviation is listed for the state receiving the best reported score.*

EVERY FAMILY INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILD'S LEARNING



When schools work together with families to support learning, children tend to succeed not just in school, but throughout life. In fact, the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family becomes involved in their children's education at school and in the community, is able to create a home environment that encourages learning, and expresses high expectations for their children's achievement and future careers (Henderson and Berla, 1994).

Since 2000, the state improved its performance on this priority by 1 percentage point. Currently, North Carolina is 93 percent of the way to meeting the targets for family involvement. Information provided by teachers, parents, and students demonstrates that parents are very involved in their child's learning at home and are offered ample opportunities to volunteer in their child's school. To achieve the *First in America* targets in this priority area, the state must increase the percentage of parents involved in their child's school.

UPDATED OR NEW DATA FOR 2001:

○ PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS WHO ACTIVELY PROMOTE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

○ PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS WHO ACTIVELY SUPPORT THEIR CHILD'S LEARNING AT SCHOOL AND AT HOME

○ PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO DISCUSS THEIR STUDIES AT HOME DAILY

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Nine of 10 NC teachers will engage in activities that promote parental involvement.

PERCENTAGE OF TEACHERS WHO ACTIVELY PROMOTE PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Offering Opportunities for Parents to Volunteer

Teachers and school administrators set the tone for parental involvement in schools. As in 2000, this year's survey of North Carolina teachers revealed that the state is close to achieving its target on this measure. Eighty-eight percent (88 percent) of teachers offer parents opportunities to get involved in their child's school through at least two of the following activities: 1) volunteering in their child's classroom, 2) volunteering outside of their child's classroom, and 3) mentoring students other than their own child.

The vast majority of teachers reported that opportunities were available at their school for parents to volunteer in the classroom (89 percent) or outside of the classroom (90 percent). Significantly fewer teachers reported opportunities for parents to mentor students other than their own (69 percent).

Communicating with Parents

Because parental involvement is so critical to student learning, the *First in America* target is that nine of ten North Carolina teachers will engage in activities that promote parental involvement. To determine what percentage of North Carolina's teachers are making an active effort to promote parental involvement, we did not simply ask teachers whether they try to get parents involved in their children's learning. Rather, we asked how frequently, if at all, teachers across all grade levels do the following: give parents written interim reports during grading periods, request that parents sign-off on homework, give parents written information about the school's overall performance on standardized tests, give parents positive phone calls or notes when their children's performance improves at school, and/or give parents examples of student work that meets high standards. To be counted as making an active effort, a teacher had to report that he or she "sometimes," "frequently," or "always" communicates with parents in three of these five ways.

By this standard, 79 percent of North Carolina teachers reported that they made substantial efforts to promote parent involvement in 2001. North Carolina has made significant progress on this measure since the initial 2000 *First in America* reports revealed that only 70 percent of teachers regularly made such efforts.

The state must increase its current performance by 11 percentage points in order to achieve the *First in America* target on this measure. Particular attention should be paid to increasing the percentage of parents asked to sign off on homework (currently 76 percent) and to providing parents with information on school performance on standardized tests (currently 70 percent).

Related Information and Perspectives

A one-size-fits-all approach for communicating with parents will not work. When asked the best way for teachers to communicate with them, parents identified a variety of approaches:

- A majority of parents preferred receiving phone calls in the day (49 percent) or evening (45 percent);
- Twenty-one percent (21 percent) of parents preferred home visits; and
- Twenty-one percent (21 percent) of parents preferred workplace visits.

While almost all teachers said that they make phone calls to parents during the day (94 percent), the percentage of teachers who use other methods of communication – evening phone calls, email, home visits, and workplace visits – dropped significantly.

Nine of 10 parents will take steps to support their child's learning.

The *First in America* target is for nine out of ten North Carolina parents to provide active support for their child's learning – not only by participating in his or her school, but also by doing a number of things right at home.

PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS WHO ACTIVELY SUPPORT THEIR CHILD'S LEARNING AT SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Parental involvement in their child's school

Through a telephone survey of a representative statewide sample of North Carolina parents, we asked parents how often they participate in 4 specific school activities. Parents were asked if they attended parent teacher organization or association meetings, volunteered in their child's classroom, volunteered in their child's school but outside of their child's classroom, and/or mentored students other than their own. In order to meet our criteria for involvement, parents had to respond that they participated "occasionally," "monthly," or "weekly" in at least 2 of these 4 activities.

By this standard, the level of parental involvement in schools did not change significantly from last year. Sixty-two percent (62 percent) of parents who are offered the opportunity to participate in these school activities reported that they are involved "occasionally," "monthly," or "weekly." The number of parents involved in their child's school must increase by 28 percentage points in order to meet the *First in America* target of nine in ten.

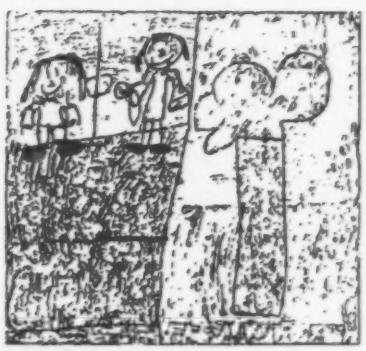
Related Information and Perspectives

Meeting this target may be quite difficult. Work schedules and other demands on parents' time often make it hard for parents to volunteer during the school day. Schools will need to develop creative strategies and offer multiple opportunities to involve a wider range of parents.

Parental support for their child's learning at home

In the same telephone survey, parents were asked whether they supported their child's learning at home by ensuring that their child attended school, ensuring that reading material was available for their child, ensuring that homework assigned to their child was completed, and reading and/or discussing homework with their child. Eighty-nine percent (89 percent) of parents reported that they support their child's learning at home through at least 3 of those 4 activities on a "daily" or "weekly" basis. This figure did not change significantly from 2000 and is very close to the *First in America* target of nine out of ten parents supporting their children's learning at home.

While parental involvement in schools may be limited, parents are quite involved in their child's education at home. On a daily basis, 87 percent of the parents surveyed said that they ensured that their child attended school, and over three-quarters of parents (79 percent) ensured that homework assigned to their child was completed. Also on a daily basis, almost 8 out of 10 parents (78 percent) ensured that reading material was available for their child and 68 percent of parents read and/or discussed homework with their children on a daily basis.



Katie Cassidy, Second Grade,
Brassfield Elementary School,
Raleigh, NC

NC will be one of the nation's top 10 states in family support for homework.

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO DISCUSS THEIR STUDIES AT HOME DAILY

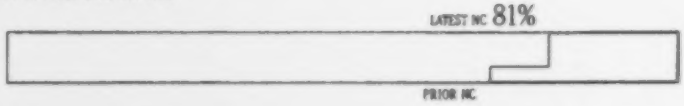
The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) gives us another way to gauge how much support for learning students are getting at home – the students' own reports. NAEP asks 4th and 8th graders whether their parents discuss their homework with them on a daily basis.

In the most recent questionnaire, administered as a part of the 2000 NAEP mathematics assessment, 58 percent of North Carolina's 4th graders reported that they discuss their studies at home daily. This result places North Carolina in a tie with Virginia for 4th place.* While North Carolina's performance did not improve significantly since 1998, the state did achieve its target ranking.

On the figures for 8th graders, North Carolina has also achieved the current *First in America* target. Forty-two percent (42 percent) of the state's 8th graders reported that they discuss their studies at home daily. The state is tied for 5th in the nation with four other states -- California, Kentucky, Maryland, and New York – and has exceeded the national average of 38 percent on this measure.

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK
EVERY COMMUNITY INVOLVED IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING		
• Nine out of 10 parents will report that their employers offer opportunities for school involvement.	o Percentage of parents who report that their employer offers opportunities for school involvement	LATEST NC SCORE: 55% PRIOR NC SCORE: 46% CHANGE: ↑
• 40,000 mentors will be supporting children's learning in NC.	Number of people serving as mentors	LATEST NC SCORE: 40,000+ PRIOR NC SCORE: 21,500 CHANGE: ↑

EVERY COMMUNITY INVOLVED IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING



Communities and businesses can help parents and schools improve a child's success in school. Businesses and individuals can directly impact student learning through partnerships with specific schools by sponsoring educational trips, providing internships, offering development opportunities for school staff, serving as tutors and mentors, or providing donations of educational materials, technology, and professional expertise (Ballen and Moles, 1994).

Unfortunately, no good data exist that would permit us to track many of these contributions. Through our own survey, we have been able to gather reliable information on the opportunities for school involvement that employers provide parents. We also report data on the number of people who serve as mentors to young people in the state.

Currently the state is 81 percent of the way to meeting its targets for this priority – an improvement of nine percentage points since the 2000 *First in America* report. This improvement results from an increase in the percentage of employers supporting employee involvement in schools.

UPDATED OR NEW DATA FOR 2001:

O PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS WHO REPORT THAT THEIR EMPLOYER OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT

Nine out of 10 parents will report that their employers offer opportunities for school involvement.

PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS WHO REPORT THAT THEIR EMPLOYER OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOOL INVOLVEMENT

The *First in America* goal is for nine in ten parents to say that their employer offers, and they take advantage of, opportunities to get involved in their child's school. We asked parents statewide if their employer offers any of the following family-friendly business practices: 1) paid maternity leave, 2) paid paternity leave, 3) paid educational leave, 4) family leave, 5) child care assistance, 6) flex-time, 7) fundraising efforts at the workplace for schools, and 8) time off for mentoring, tutoring, or volunteer work in schools. To be counted as reporting that their employer offers opportunities for school involvement, a parent had to say that their employer offers at least half (4) of the 8 opportunities.

Since the 2000 *First in America* reports, North Carolina has made substantial progress – from 40 percent to 55 percent of parents reporting that their employer meets this standard. The percentage of employers offering each opportunity for school involvement increased between 2000 and 2001. The most significant gains were seen in the following:

- a 14 percentage point increase in the provision of fundraising efforts for schools at your workplace,
- a 9 percentage point increase in time off for mentoring, tutoring, or volunteer work in schools,
- an 8 percentage point increase in the provision of paid educational leave,
- an 8 percentage point increase in the provision of paid maternity leave,
- a 7 percentage point increase in the provision of family leave, and
- a 6 percentage point increase in the provision of flex-time.

While these gains are impressive, an additional gain of 35 percentage points will be required to meet the *First in America* target by 2010.

Related Information and Perspectives

In addition to providing employees with enough flexibility to get involved in schools, businesses play an important role as partners to schools and school districts. The 2002 Governor's Business Partnership Awards salute businesses that best demonstrate the critical elements of a successful partnership: 1) alignment with school improvement plans or school system goals; 2) activities that help improve student performance; 3) a method of evaluation to measure, track, and evaluate substantive change and the effectiveness of the partnership; and 4) a framework or process for sustaining progress.

In a recent survey of school systems, the North Carolina Public School Forum found that three-fourths of the 116 public school systems in North Carolina have community or business partnerships (North Carolina Public School Forum, 2001). The majority of these partnerships are organized through Local Education Funds, local chambers of commerce, or business-education programs that provide support, resources, and technical assistance.

Despite this good news, there is room for improvement. Twenty-five percent (25 percent) of North Carolina's school districts have no partnerships at all. Even among those that do, 80 percent of superintendents surveyed reported that one or more of their private sector partnerships were weak or only partially effective. Ninety-five percent (95 percent) of superintendents expressed an interest in strengthening their partnerships and a willingness to participate in training and receive technical assistance on how to do so.

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK

Changes: ⇑ North Carolina's score was significantly better / ⇓ North Carolina's score was significantly worse / ⇔ Between North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant. / * On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.

EVERY CHILD WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE

- NC will be one of the top 10 states in child health and well-being.

o Child health indicator*

INFANT MORTALITY RATE*

LATEST NC SCORE	PRIOR NC SCORE	CHANGE	NC RANK	US AVERAGE	TARGET SCORE	FIRST
9.3	9.2	⇓	46th	7.2	6.5	4.4 (NH)

o Access to health care

% OF 2-YEAR OLD CHILDREN WITH IMMUNIZATIONS

LATEST NC SCORE	PRIOR NC SCORE	CHANGE	NC RANK	US AVERAGE	TARGET SCORE	FIRST
88%	82%	⇑	1st	78%	83%	88% (NC)

% OF CHILDREN WITH HEALTH INSURANCE

LATEST NC SCORE	PRIOR NC SCORE	CHANGE	NC RANK	US AVERAGE	TARGET SCORE	FIRST
90%	88%	⇑	Tied for 26th	88%	93%	98% (CT,RI)

Child health behaviors*

% OF CHILDREN 12-17 HAVING 5 OR MORE ALCOHOLIC DRINKS IN A ROW DURING THE LAST MONTH*

LATEST NC SCORE	PRIOR NC SCORE	CHANGE	NC RANK	US AVERAGE	TARGET SCORE	FIRST
8%	8%	⇔	Tied for 5th	10%	9%	7% (DC,MD,UT,VA)

% OF CHILDREN 12-17 USING MARIJUANA IN THE LAST MONTH*

LATEST NC SCORE	PRIOR NC SCORE	CHANGE	NC RANK	US AVERAGE	TARGET SCORE	FIRST
7%	7%	⇔	Tied for 14th	7%	6%	5% (IA,KY,TN)

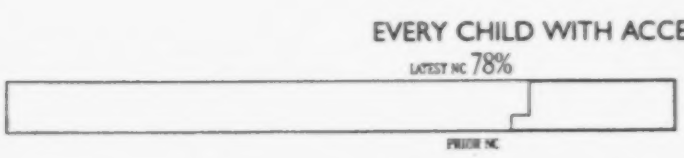
% OF CHILDREN 12-17 WHO CURRENTLY USE CIGARETTES*

LATEST NC SCORE	PRIOR NC SCORE	CHANGE	NC RANK	US AVERAGE	TARGET SCORE	FIRST
19%	19%	⇔	Tied for 41st	15%	14%	9% (CA)

o Support for children's nutrition

	LATEST NC SCORE	PRIOR NC SCORE	CHANGE
FREE AND REDUCED MEAL PARTICIPATION	86%	87%	⇓
SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM PARTICIPATION	9%	9%	⇔

EVERY CHILD WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE



Children who are unhealthy, engaged in high-risk behaviors, or undernourished can neither develop normally nor learn to their full potential (National Education Goals Panel, 1997). For this reason, the *First in America* reports monitor children's health, access to health care, and access to adequate nutrition.

North Carolina made little progress in this priority area. The state is 78 percent of the way to meeting its targets for this priority – a slight improvement since 2000. North Carolina is meeting the current *First in America* target for child immunizations. The state is also performing well on the targets for providing children with health insurance

and free and reduced price meals during the school year. Marked improvements in the rate of infant mortality and a broader provision of summer food programs will be required for the state to make the overall target for this *First in America* priority.

UPDATED OR NEW DATA FOR 2001:

O CHILD HEALTH INDICATOR*

O ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

O SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN'S NUTRITION

NC will be one of the top 10 states in child health and well-being.

CHILD HEALTH INDICATOR*

Infant mortality rate

The initial *First in America* reports included a measure of the percentage of infants facing four risk factors: 1) late (third trimester) or no prenatal care, 2) low maternal weight gain, 3) maternal smoking during pregnancy, and 4) maternal alcohol consumption during pregnancy. This measure, computed by the National Education Goals Panel, is no longer available. The Education Cabinet has chosen to replace this indicator with the rate of infant mortality.

North Carolina's infant mortality rates have consistently exceeded those of the nation. A majority of these deaths can be attributed to the four risk factors monitored by the National Education Goal Panel. And while considerable efforts are being made by state health officials to reduce these risk factors, in 1998, the last year for which comparative state data are available, North Carolina had 9.3 infant deaths per 1000 live births. This rate placed the state at 46th in the nation and far from the *First in America* target of being among the top ten states. In order to achieve the current target, North Carolina would need to lower its infant mortality rate by 3 deaths per 1000 live births.

While North Carolina has a long way to go to meet its current target, the state's infant mortality rate is steadily declining. Between 1998 and 2000, North Carolina's rate decreased from 9.3 to 8.6 (2000 data from other states are not available). The state has focused aggressively on increasing access to prenatal care, improving the quality of available prenatal services, and reducing key lifestyle and behavioral risks such as smoking.

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Percent of 2-year old children with immunizations

Immunizations are a good gauge of whether young children have had any formal medical care. North Carolina has made a considerable effort to improve immunization rates and its efforts are paying off. North Carolina now ranks number one in the nation in the percentage of two-year olds who have been fully immunized. In order to be counted as fully immunized, children must receive four doses of the diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccine, three doses of the polio vaccine, and one dose of either the measles or the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine by the time they are 35 months old.

According to the *2000 National Immunization Survey* published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 88 percent of two-year old children in North Carolina are fully immunized. Between 1999 and 2000, North Carolina improved its immunization rate by 6 percentage points and exceeded the current *First in America* target of 83 percent, the percentage required to make it into the top ten, by 5 percentage points. The state also exceeded the national average of 78 percent.

The notable improvement in state immunization rates may be attributed to a strong partnership among state officials, state medical societies, and private health care providers. North Carolina is one of only 15 states that supplement federal funds so that all children, regardless of income, can receive free vaccinations. The state immunization process avoids many of the bureaucratic setbacks that are commonplace in other states. Free vaccines are distributed to 95 percent of private pediatric providers so that immunizations are always available. In addition, vaccinations are

provided free of charge to all children, so there is no burdensome screening process. A well-trained state staff and a strong pediatric society have played important roles in establishing and promoting this streamlined process.

Percent of children with health insurance

Currently, 90 percent of North Carolina's children have health insurance. The state's rate is above the national average of 88 percent but remains 3 percentage points below the current *First in America* target of 93 percent. North Carolina increased the percentage of insured children by 2 percentage points and improved its rank from 28th to 26th in the nation between 2000 and 2001. The greatest increases in North Carolina have been achieved through employment-based health insurance.

Related Information and Perspectives

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is a joint state and federal initiative to provide health insurance to children. The CHIP program provides coverage for children in working families who earn too little to pay for private health insurance, but too much to qualify for Medicaid. The program covers everything from well-baby visits, to hospital care, to prescription drugs. In addition, CHIP provides coverage for vision, hearing, dental, and mental health screenings and treatment (North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Women's and Children's Health, Children and Youth Branch, 2001).

After making impressive strides in 2000 by enrolling 99 percent of eligible children (nearly 72,000), the number of eligible children served shrank to 76 percent (62,500) in 2001. Because of the state's severe budget crisis, enrollment was capped at 72,000 children and reenrollment was frozen for several months. Even when slots became available, new enrollments were prohibited. In addition, families who completed their year of coverage during the freeze were not allowed to reenroll, as required by program regulations.

The North Carolina General Assembly took several important steps in the 2001-2003 state budget to reach the state's eligible children. The budget raises the cap on enrollment to 83,000 children in 2001 and 100,000 children in 2002. In addition, the legislature eliminated the two-month waiting period for all children. Program administrators expect to be able to enroll as many as 4,000 children per month until all eligible children are again enrolled.

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN'S NUTRITION

Good nutrition is critical to the long-term health of children and their ability to succeed in school. Free and reduced meal participation is one gauge of support for child nutrition. Overall, North Carolina has good programs for providing students with basic nutritional needs during the school year. Unfortunately, for one quarter of the year when school is not in session, most eligible children in North Carolina do not have access to the same level of nutritional assistance.

The federal government funds free and reduced price meals for children whose families meet low-income standards. The state and schools make the program work by making it easy for families to apply and by encouraging their participation. Ideally, we would assess North Carolina's efforts by comparing the number of children whose families meet the income standards to the number of children served by the programs. Unfortunately, data are not collected on the number of school-aged children in North Carolina whose families meet the income criteria for receiving free or reduced price lunches. What is available is the number of children who have been deemed eligible through an approval process and then choose to participate. The *First in America* target is that 9 of 10 children who have been approved will choose to participate in the free and reduced meal program.

North Carolina is close to achieving its target for participation during the school year. During the 2000-01 school year, approximately 86 percent of approved children participated in the school meal program – a decline of 1 percentage point since the prior school year. Overall, schools are doing a good job of encouraging children and their families to participate.

However, participation during the summers of 2000 and 2001 was considerably lower. The Summer Food Service Program served only 9 percent of approved children each year. Children are more difficult to reach during the summer, fewer sites provide summer meals, and fewer families are aware of meal programs. Summer meals can be sponsored by a variety of public and private non-profit organizations and provided at a number of sites, such as

schools, recreation or community centers, churches, or summer camps. In order to reach the *First in America* target for summer meal participation, North Carolina will need to find ways to encourage more organizations to participate in the summer meal program and to inform eligible families about the program's existence.

Related Information and Perspectives

Simplifying the approval process will help schools and other organizations to reach as many eligible children as possible. A written application may be burdensome to some families, and other families whose income drops during the school year may not know to request an application. This barrier can be eliminated through direct certification. Direct certification allows school systems and other organizations to electronically connect to county social service records. Families who are eligible for AFDC or Medicaid are automatically approved for participation in meal programs. The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System, for example, enrolls a majority of their approved students through the direct certification process. Increasing access to direct certification may be one way to improve North Carolina's performance on this measure.

Bibliography

HIGH STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Powell, Brian and Laila Carr Steelman. (1996). "Bewitched, Bothered, and Bewildering: The Use and Misuse of State SAT and ACT Scores." *Harvard Educational Review* 66, 1-59.

EVERY CHILD READY TO LEARN

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, Research Information and Services Department. (2000). *Survey and Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends 2000*. Washington, DC: AFT.

Anderson, R.C., et al. (1985). *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading*. Washington, DC: The National Institute of Education.

Beentjes, J.W.J. and Van der Voort, T.H.A. (1998). "Television's Impact on Children's Reading Skills: A Review of the Research." *Reading Research Quarterly* 23, 389-413.

Frede, Ellen C. (1995). "The Role of Program Quality in Producing Early Childhood Program Benefits." *Long-Term Outcomes of Early Childhood Programs* 5, no. 3, 1.

Greene, Jay P. (2001). *High School Graduation Rates in the United States*. New York: The Black Alliance for Educational Options and the Center for Civic Innovation, The Manhattan Institute.

McConnell, Scott R. and Rabe, Holly L. S. (1999). *Home and Community Factors that Promote Early Literacy Development for Preschool-Aged Children*. Minneapolis, MN: Center for Early Education and Development.

National Education Goals Panel. (1997). *Special Early Childhood Report*. Washington, DC: GPO.

Nelson, F. Howard. (1991). "An Interstate Cost-of-Living Index." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 13, 103-111.

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development. (2000). *Rated License Requirements*. Raleigh, NC: DHHS. Available from http://www.dhhs.state.nc.us/dcd.

University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Team. (1999). *The Children of the Cost, Quality, and Outcomes Study Go To School*. Chapel Hill, NC: FPG.

University of North Carolina, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, Smart Start Evaluation Team. (1997). *Families and the North Carolina Smart Start Initiative*. Chapel Hill, NC: FPG.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Adult Literacy. (2001). *NAAL Fact Sheet*. Washington, DC: NCES. Available from http://nces.ed.gov/naal.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Educational Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress. (1996). *Reading Proficiency and Home Support for Literacy*. Washington, DC: NAEP.

Whitebook, M., Howes, C., and Phillips, D. (1998). *Worthy Work, Unlivable Wages: The National Child Care Staffing Study, 1988–1997*.

SAFE, ORDERLY, AND CARING SCHOOLS

Achilles, C. (1994). *Success Starts Small: Life in a Small Class: Final Report*. Greensboro, NC: University of North Carolina.

Ballen, Jennifer and Moles, Oliver. (1994). *Strong Families, Strong Schools: Building Community Partnerships for Learning*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education. Available from http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/families/strong.

Education Week. (1999). "Reporting Results: What the Public Wants to Know." *Quality Counts '99: Rewarding Results, Punishing Failure*. Bethesda, MD: Education Week.

Egelson, P., Harman, P., and Achilles, C.M. (1996). *Does Class Size Make a Difference? Recent Findings from State and District Initiatives*. Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse.

Finn, J., et al. (2000). *It's Time to Drop the Other Shoe (The Evidence on Teacher Aides)*. Paper presented at the Mid South Educational Research Association. Bowling Green, KY: MSERA.

Finn, J., Gerber, S. B., Achilles, C. M., and Boyd-Zaharias, J. (2000). *The Enduring Effects of Small Classes*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association. New Orleans, LA: American Educational Research Association.

Glass, G. & Smith, M. (1998). Meta-analysis of research on the Relationship of Class Size and Achievement. In J. Finn (Ed.), *Class Size and Students At-Risk: What is Known? What is Next? A Commissioned Paper*. Washington, DC: National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students, US Department of Education.

Molnar, A., et al. (1999). Evaluating the SAGE Program: A Pilot Program in Targeted Pupil Teacher Reduction in Wisconsin. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 21,2.

Public Schools of North Carolina, Division of Education Technologies. (2000). *The North Carolina Educational Technology Plan*, 2001-2005. Raleigh, NC: NCDPI.

Public Schools of North Carolina, Division of School Improvement, Alternative and Safe Schools/Instructional Support Section. (2001). *2000-01 Annual Report on School Crime and Violence*. Raleigh, NC: NCDPI.

Public Schools of North Carolina, Financial and Business Services, School Support, School Planning Section. (2001). *Statewide School Facility Needs Survey: 2000/01 Report on the Needs of the North Carolina School Systems*. Raleigh, NC: NCDPI.

Roderick, Melissa. (1995). *The Path To Dropping Out: Evidence for Intervention*. Westport, CT: Auburn House.

Word, et al. (1990). *Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR): Tennessee's K-3 Class Size Study, Final Report*. Nashville, TN: Tennessee State Department of Education.

QUALITY TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO, Research Information and Services Department. (2000). *Survey and Analysis of Teacher Salary Trends 2000*. Washington, DC: AFT.

Darling-Hammond, Linda. (1995). "Inequality and Access to Knowledge." In James Banks, ed. *Handbook of Research on Multicultural Education*. New York: Macmillan.

Darling-Hammond, Linda. (1999). *Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A Review of State Policy Evidence*. New York: Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy.

Fullan, Michael, ed. (2000). *The Jossey-Bass Reader on Educational Leadership*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Keller, Bess. (1998). "Principal Matters." *Education Week* 11, 25-27.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. (2001). *Standards: What Teachers Should Know and Be Able to Do*. Available from http://www.nbpts.org.

Nelson, F. Howard. (1991). "An Interstate Cost-of-Living Index." *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 13, 103-111.

Public Schools of North Carolina, State Department of Public Instruction, Division of Human Resource Management. (1998). *Teacher Supply and Demand Report*. Raleigh, NC: NCDPI.

Sanders, William L. and Rivers, June C. (1996). *Cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Academic Achievement*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Value-Added Research and Assessment Center.

Sergiovanni, Thomas. (2000). *The Principalship: A Reflective Practice Perspective*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

STRONG FAMILY, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Ballen, Jennifer and Moles, Oliver. (1994). *Strong Families, Strong Schools: Building Community Partnerships for Learning*. Washington, DC: US Department of Education. Available from http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/families/strong/.

Henderson, Anne T. and Berla, Nancy, eds. (1994). *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement*. Washington, DC: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

National Education Goals Panel. (1997). *Special Early Childhood Report*. Washington, DC: GPO.

North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Women's and Children's Health, Children and Youth Branch. (November 2001). "CHIP Enrollment." Raleigh, NC: DHHS.

North Carolina Public School Forum. (2001). *Catalyst Report on School Partnerships*. Raleigh, NC: NC Public School Forum.

Authors and Contributors

EDUCATION CABINET

MICHAEL F. EASLEY, Governor
MOLLY CORBETT BROAD, President, The University of North Carolina
PHILLIP J. KIRK, JR., Chairman, North Carolina State Board of Education
H. MARTIN LANCASTER, President, North Carolina Community College System
MICHAEL E. WARD, Superintendent, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
A. **HOPE WILLIAMS**, North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities

EDUCATION CABINET STAFF

J.B. BUXTON, North Carolina Office of the Governor
JANE WORSHAM, North Carolina State Board of Education
BRAD SNEEDEN, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
DONNY HUNTER, North Carolina Community College System
CHARLES R. COBLE, The University of North Carolina
TIMOTHY H. MCDOWELL, North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities
KAREN PONDER, North Carolina Partnership for Children

EDITORS AND AUTHORS

We wish to thank the authors, advisors, and reviewers for their assistance at various stages of the design and writing of the First in America reports. The final content of the reports and any remaining errors are the sole responsibility of the editors.

CHARLES L. THOMPSON is Director of the NC Education Research Council. Before returning to North Carolina to direct the Council, Thompson held several positions at Michigan State University, including Associate Professor of Teacher Education, Associate Dean, Director of Professional Development Schools, Director of the Michigan Education Extension Service, and Co-Principal Investigator of the Michigan Statewide Systemic Initiative. Earlier in his career, Thompson directed a research center on education technology at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, served as Vice President at Education Development Center, and held positions at the National Institute of Education, the Pennsylvania Advancement School, and the North Carolina Advancement School. Thompson holds an Ed.D. and a master's degree from Harvard and a B.A. from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is the author of the *Executive Summary* and a co-editor of this report.

ELIZABETH KOLB CUNNINGHAM is a Research Associate with the North Carolina Education Research Council. She received her J.D. from Wake Forest University and a B.A. from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Mrs. Cunningham is the author of the chapters on *High Student Performance, Every Child Ready to Learn,* and *Quality Teachers and Administrators* and a co-editor of this report.

ANN McCOLL is an attorney and consultant in the field of education law. She received her J.D. and B.A. from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has worked for school districts and organizations serving schools and is on the graduate faculty for the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Mrs. McColl is the author of the chapters on *Safe, Orderly, and Caring Schools* and *Strong Family, Business, and Community Support.*

ADVISORS AND REVIEWERS

ESRA ALKAN, Georgia State University Applied Research Center
AMANDA BERNHARD KITTELBERGER, North Carolina Education Research Council
DONNA BRYANT, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
MARGARET CAMP, North Carolina Education Research Council
DICK CLIFFORD, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
GARY HENRY, The Packard Foundation
SHERICK HUGHES, School of Education, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
LYLE V. JONES, Professor of Psychology, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and former Director of the L. L. Thurstone Psychometric Laboratory
KELLY MAXWELL, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill
DANA RICKMAN, Georgia State University Applied Research Center
GARY WILLIAMSON, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

DESIGNERS

DANA DAVIS BAYLEY, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Design Services
DAVID KERNODLE, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Design Services

THE NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATION RESEARCH COUNCIL

The North Carolina Education Research Council provides research to support decision-making on major policy issues by the Education Cabinet and the units of state government its members represent. The Cabinet includes the Governor, the Chair of the State Board of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the President of the North Carolina Community College System, the President of the University of North Carolina, and the President of the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities.

For more information on the *First in America* project, the North Carolina Education Research Council, or to obtain printed copies of reports produced by the Council, please contact us at fia@northcarolina.edu, 919.843.8127, or contact any member of our staff.

THE STAFF OF THE NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATION RESEARCH COUNCIL

CHARLES L. THOMPSON, DIRECTOR
919.962.8373
clthomps@northcarolina.edu

AMANDA BERNHARD KITTELBERGER
919.843.6951
bernhard@northcarolina.edu

MARGARET CAMP
919.843.6783
mcercado@northcarolina.edu

ELIZABETH KOLB CUNNINGHAM
919.843.8127
ek@northcarolina.edu

Appendices

Appendix A: Computation of the First in America Grades

The strategy for computing grades for each goal relied upon the targets that were set for each of the individual indicators of performance. The *First in America* reports have five goals. Each goal has either three or four priorities. Each priority has between one and seven targets, and a single target can have as many as 11 separate indicators. The indicators must first be combined to get an overall sense of how North Carolina fares on the performance criteria that comprise the target. Because the indicators, and therefore the targets, are expressed in different terms (e.g., percentages, rates, mean scores), it was necessary to use a method that would allow different types of indicators and targets to be combined, first to the level of the priorities and then to the level of the goals.

GENERAL APPROACH

The general approach used to combine the indicators to the level of targets was to express North Carolina's current performance as a percentage of the overall target. For targets where the objective was to be in the top ten states among all fifty states and the District of Columbia, the 10th state's score was the denominator and the performance score for North Carolina was the numerator.

For indicators with fewer than fifty states reporting, the value to be indexed against is the state or states at the equivalent of the 10th state (10/51). For instance, if 24 states reported, the state representing the goal would be the 5th state. For the other frequently used objective, 9 out of 10 agree with a series of statements, 90 was the denominator and the North Carolina score (in percentage terms) was used as the numerator. All other objectives were set using a parallel method, that is, taking the North Carolina score as the numerator and the target as the denominator.

COMBINING THE INDICATOR RESULTS

To combine the indicators to the level of targets, each indicator was given equal weight and the scores were averaged. Targets were then averaged, giving each target an equal weight for the priority "grade equivalent." To aggregate to the goal level, the process was repeated for each priority beneath a particular goal, again with each priority receiving equal weight.

SPECIAL NOTES FOR 2001

In order to ensure year-to-year comparability, we have and will continue to avoid making changes to the *First in America* indicators and grading system. However, as important new information becomes available, data sources discontinue their collection and publication of information, or *First in America* targets are no longer appropriate, modifications must be made. The following changes were made in the 2001 *First in America* indicators. Whenever possible, the same change was made to the 2000 *First in America* indicators and the 2000 grades were recalculated.

New indicators included in the 2001 reports:

- *NAEP Grade 4 Science:* In 2000, NAEP conducted the first state-level science assessment for 4th grade students. Because no prior score is available, the 2000 grades could not be recalculated to include this assessment. As a result, 4th grade science scores are omitted from the calculation of the 2000 and 2001 grades. Fourth grade science scores will be included in future First in America grade calculations.
- *Percentage of tested 5th grade students promoted having met state grade level standards in reading and mathematics:* The First in America reports include the percentage of tested 5th grade students promoted having met state grade level standards in reading and mathematics during the 2000-01 school year. This is the first year in which the 5th grade gateway standard based on state ABCs assessments has been implemented. Because no prior score is available, the 2000 grades could not be recalculated to include the 5th grade promotion rate. Therefore the rate was also excluded from the computation of the 2001 First in America grades. Fifth grade promotion percentages will be included in future First in America grade calculations. And as student accountability standards are implemented in grades 3, 8, and 12, the promotion rates for these grades will also be included.
- *Percentage of 25-to-44 year old high school graduates enrolled full- or part-time in higher education:* The *First in America* reports now include data on the percentage of 25-to-44 year olds currently enrolled in any post-secondary education. This measure is based on the 12-month *Current Population Survey* (CPS) maintained by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Because of small sample sizes, the state-level completion data are calculated using three-year averages. The Bureau of Labor Statistics supplied the latest available score for North Carolina based on responses from their 1996 to 1998 surveys and a prior score based on responses to their 1995 to 1997 surveys. The 2000 and 2001 *First in America* grades have been recalculated to include these scores.
- *Average size of classes in kindergarten through 3rd grade:* The average size of classes in North Carolina kindergarten through third grades has been included in the *First in America* reports. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction provided current class size data from the 2001-02 school year and prior data from the 2000-01 school year. The 2000 and 2001 *First in America* grades have been recalculated to include these scores.
- *Infant Mortality Rate:* State infant mortality rates have been included in the First in America reports. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report the latest available cross-data from 1998 and prior data from 1997. The 2000 and 2001 First in America grades have been recalculated to include these scores.

New data sources used in the 2001 reports:

- *Students enrolled in two- and four-year programs of higher education:* The 2000 *First in America* reports included data on higher education enrollment obtained from the National Education Goals Panel. Because the Panel is no longer providing this information, the 2001 *First in America* reports include data on the enrollment status of 18-to-24 year olds in each state based on the 12-month *Current Population Survey* (CPS) maintained by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Because of small sample sizes, the state-level completion data are calculated using

three-year averages. The Bureau of Labor Statistics supplied the latest available score for North Carolina based on responses from their1996 to 1998 surveys and a prior score based on responses to their 1995 to 1997 surveys. The 2000 and 2001 *First in America* grades have been recalculated to include these scores.

Target and definitional changes in the 2001 reports:

- *Gap in percent proficient on NAEP and percent at or above grade level on NC examinations:* The 2000 North Carolina minority achievement gap composite included two End-of-Grade scores – the percentage of students at or above level III on the End-of-Grade reading exam and the percentage of students at or above level III on the End-of-Grade math exam. The 2001 composite has been adjusted to include only one End-of-Grade score – the percentage of students at or above level III on both the End-of-Grade reading and math exams. The 2000 and 2001 *First in America* grades have been recalculated based on this adjustment.
- *NC kindergartners' readiness scores and NC schools' readiness for kindergartners:* The 2000 *First in America* reports established targets for North Carolina kindergartners on the *North Carolina School Readiness Assessment*. The 2000 results revealed that North Carolina's kindergartners were close to meeting or exceeding each of these targets. Based on these positive findings, the 2001 reports establish more aggressive targets for each component of the *School Readiness Assessment*. The 2000 and 2001 *First in America* grades have been recalculated using these new targets.

Appendix B: 2001 First in America Survey Methodology

2001 SURVEY OF NORTH CAROLINA TEACHERS

The sample of 2,350 teachers was drawn by staff at the Georgia State University Applied Research Center based on records provided by the North Carolina Education Research Council. During the second week of April, 2001 cover letters and surveys were mailed to all sample members at their school address. The letter provided a brief explanation of the research project and it's purpose, asked that the respondent help in the research effort by completing the survey when they received it, and included a postage-paid postcard where the respondent could provide the Center with an alternate address to which the survey should be mailed. The mailing also included a copy of the *2001 Teachers' Survey* and a postage-paid return envelope labeled with a unique respondent identification number. Return envelopes were addressed to the North Carolina Education Research Council. Surveys were received by the Research Council and forwarded regularly to the Applied Research Center. Identification numbers found on the returned envelopes were recorded and removed from the list for subsequent mailings.

Approximately two weeks after the initial mailing, a reminder postcard was sent to those respondents from whom the Applied Research Council had not received a survey. Approximately one week following this first reminder, a second copy of the survey and postage-paid return envelope were sent to those respondents who had not yet completed and returned their survey.

All completed surveys were sent to the Applied Research Center via Federal Express by staff at the North Carolina Education Research Council. Staff at the Applied Research Center removed the surveys from the envelopes and recorded the associated identification numbers, ensuring that no survey form could be traced back to an individual respondent. Surveys were scanned upon receipt and the data maintained by staff of the Applied Research Center.

A total of 1,162 completed surveys were received from the 2,350 teachers for whom we had a valid address for a response rate of 50 percent. At the 95 percent confidence level, the maximum margin of error for the survey of teachers was ±2.9 percentage points.

2001 SURVEY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRINCIPALS

The sample of 833 principals was drawn by staff at the Georgia State University Applied Research Center based on records provided by the North Carolina Education Research Council. During the week of April 12, 2001, letters and surveys were mailed to all sample members at their school address. The letter provided a brief explanation of the research project and it's purpose, asked that the respondent help in the research effort by completing the survey when they received it, and included a postage-paid postcard where the respondent could provide the Center with an alternate address to which the survey should be mailed. The mailing also included a copy of the *2001 Principals' Survey* and a postage-paid return envelope labeled with a unique respondent identification number. Return envelopes were addressed to the North Carolina Education Research Council. Surveys were received by the Research Council and forwarded regularly to the Applied Research Center. Identification numbers found on the returned envelopes were recorded and removed from the list for subsequent mailings.

Approximately two weeks after the initial mailing, a reminder postcard was sent to those respondents from whom the Applied Research Council had not received a survey. Approximately ten days following this first reminder, a second copy of the survey and postage-paid return envelope were sent to those respondents who had not yet completed and returned their survey.

All completed surveys were sent to the Applied Research Center via Federal Express by staff at the North Carolina Education Research Council. Staff at the Applied Research Center removed the surveys from the envelopes and recorded the associated identification numbers, ensuring that no survey form could be traced back to an individual respondent. Surveys were scanned upon receipt and the data maintained by staff of the Applied Research Center.

A total of 616 completed surveys were received from the 833 principals for whom we had a valid address for a response rate of 74 percent. At the 95 percent confidence level, the maximum margin of error for the survey of principals was ±4.0 percentage points.

2001 SURVEY OF NORTH CAROLINA PARENTS

The sample for the survey of North Carolina parents of children age 5- to 18-years old was developed from a random digit dial sample of adults eighteen and over who reside in households in the state of North Carolina. Staff at the Georgia State University Applied Research Center began with a list of 9,560 telephone numbers generated by Survey Sampling, Inc. All numbers for households without an adult at least 18-years old, business numbers, disconnected numbers, and numbers for households without children in the North Carolina public schools were eliminated from this list. Table 1 shows the resulting distribution of eligible and non-eligible sample units.

TABLE 1: DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE UNITS

SAMPLE TYPE	TOTAL	PERCENT
Eligible Sample	2,087	21.83%
Non-Eligible	3,594	37.59%
No Adult 18 or Over	29	.30%
Business	1,062	11.11%
Disconnected or Nonworking Number	2,503	26.18%
No Children 5-18 in Household	3,828	40.04%
No Children 5-18 in Public Schools	51	.53%
TOTAL	9,560	100.0%

The *2001 Parents' Survey* began on April 10, 2001 and was completed on July 18, 2001. Interviews were conducted from 10:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays and from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. on Fridays. Weekend interviews took place from 11:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. on Saturdays and from 1:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. on Sundays.

A random respondent was chosen from each household by asking to speak with the parent 18 years of age or older who had the most recent birthday. This person became the only respondent eligible to complete the survey.

On average, 10.4 calls were made to each of the 2,087 eligible telephone numbers and the average length of the interview was 13 minutes. Table 2 displays detailed statistics for eligible households. In addition, an average of 4 calls was made to each non-sample number and an average of 7 calls to each number eliminated for not having children enrolled in the North Carolina public schools. By using refusal conversion methods 106 interviews were obtained from households in which the respondent initially refused to participate in the survey (9.3 percent of total refusals).

TABLE 2: SURVEY OUTCOMES FOR ELIGIBLE HOUSEHOLDS

OUTCOME	NUMBER	PERCENT	AVERAGE NUMBER OF CALLS
Completed Interviews	779	37.3%	5.4
Refusals by Respondent or Someone Else in Household	1,037	49.7%	9.8
Non-interviews *(Sickness, Doesn't Speak English, Out of Town, Respondent Unavailable)*	177	8.5%	27.4
Non-contacts *(All Calls Are Ring No Answer, Busy, and Answering Machines)*	94	4.5%	25.9
TOTAL	2087	100.0%	10.4

Overall 66,060 calls were placed to the 9,560 telephone numbers that made up the initial sample for an average of 6.9 calls per number. At the 95 percent confidence level, the maximum margin of error for the survey of parents was ± 3.5 percentage points.

NC SCHOOLS

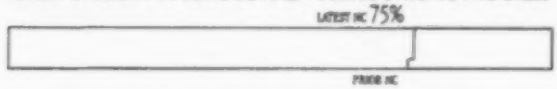
FIRST IN AMERICA

2010

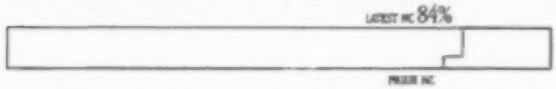
A Goal for North Carolina's Schools
2001 Report Card

C+ HIGH STUDENT PERFORMANCE

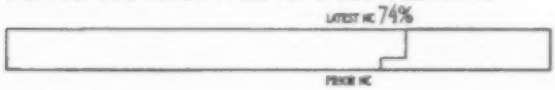
EVERY STUDENT IN SCHOOL AND MAKING STRONG PROGRESS



EVERY GRADUATE READY FOR COLLEGE AND WORK

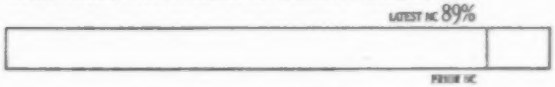


EVERY SCHOOL ACCOUNTABLE FOR STUDENT LEARNING

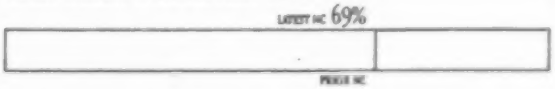


C+ EVERY CHILD READY TO LEARN

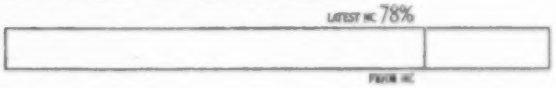
EVERY CHILD WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY CHILD CARE



EVERY PARENT A GOOD FIRST TEACHER

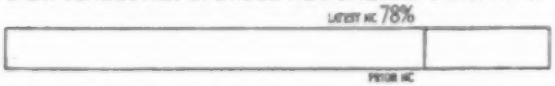


EVERY CHILD READY TO BEGIN SCHOOL

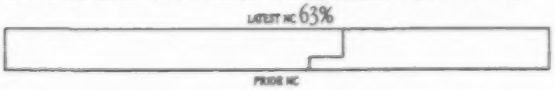


B- SAFE, ORDERLY, AND CARING SCHOOLS

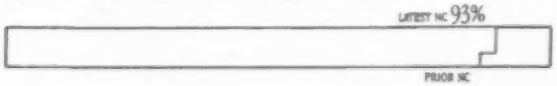
EVERY SCHOOL FREE OF DRUGS, WEAPONS, AND DISRUPTIONS



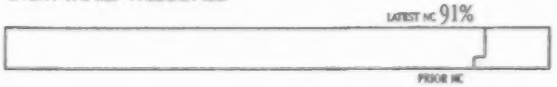
EVERY SCHOOL WITH ADEQUATE FACILITIES AND MATERIALS



EVERY STUDENT KNOWN AND CARED FOR

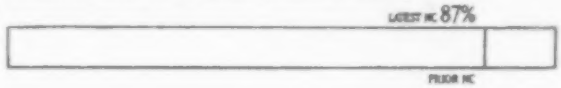


EVERY FAMILY WELCOMED

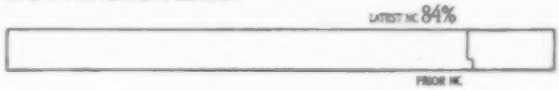


QUALITY TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS B-

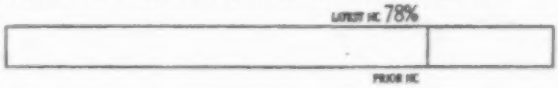
EVERY TEACHER COMPETENT, CARING, AND QUALIFIED



EVERY PRINCIPAL A LEADER

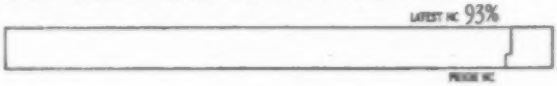


EVERY SCHOOL A GOOD PLACE TO WORK AND LEARN

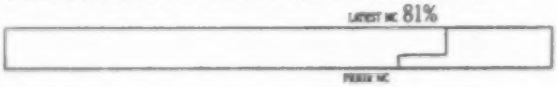


STRONG FAMILY, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT B

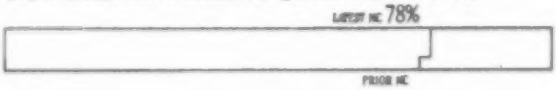
EVERY FAMILY INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILD'S LEARNING



EVERY COMMUNITY INVOLVED IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING



EVERY CHILD WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE



LEGEND

Prior NC: This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the preceding data collection.

Latest NC: This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the most recent data collection available. Most recent data collection dates range from 1993 to 2001.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

A more detailed analysis of North Carolina's performance on the *First in America* indicators is included in the *2001 Progress Report* available on the *First in America* website — http://www.firstinamerica.northcarolina.edu

A copy of the *First in America Reports* may also be requested by phone 919.843.8127, by email fia@northcarolina.edu, or by mail:

North Carolina Education Research Council
Post Office Box 2688
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27515-2688

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NORTH CAROLINA EDUCATION RESEARCH COUNCIL
Post Office Box 2688
Chapel Hill, NC 27515-2688
Telephone: 919.843.8127
Email: fia@northcarolina.edu
Website: www.firstinamerica.northcarolina.edu

NC SCHOOLS

FIRST IN AMERICA 2010

A Goal for North Carolina's Schools
2001 Data Report

First in America Goals

High Student Performance
- Every Student in School and Making Strong Progress
- Every Graduate Ready for College and Work
- Every School Accountable for Student Learning

Every Child Ready to Learn
- Every Child with Access to Quality Child Care
- Every Parent a Good First Teacher
- Every Child Ready to Begin School

Safe, Orderly, and Caring Schools
- Every School Free of Drugs, Weapons, and Disruption
- Every School with Adequate Facilities and Materials
- Every Student Known and Cared For
- Every Family Welcomed

Quality Teachers and Administrators
- Every Teacher Competent, Caring, and Qualified
- Every Principal a Leader
- Every School a Good Place to Work and Learn

Strong Family, Business, and Community Support
- Every Family Involved in Their Child's Learning
- Every Community Involved in Children's Learning
- Every Child with Access to Quality Health Care

HIGH STUDENT PERFORMANCE

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK

Changes: ⇧ North Carolina's score was significantly better. / ⇩ North Carolina's score was significantly worse. / ⇔ Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant. / * On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.

EVERY STUDENT IN SCHOOL AND MAKING STRONG PROGRESS

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK
• NC will be one of the top 10 states on National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments.	Percentage of students scoring proficient or higher on NAEP assessments	GRADE 4 READING: LATEST NC SCORE: 28% | PRIOR NC SCORE: 30% | CHANGE: ⇔ | NC RANK: Tied for 22nd | US AVERAGE: 31% | TARGET SCORE: 34% | FIRST: 46% (CT) GRADE 4 MATH: LATEST NC SCORE: 28% | PRIOR NC SCORE: 21% | CHANGE: ⇧ | NC RANK: Tied for 8th | US AVERAGE: 25% | TARGET SCORE: 28% | FIRST: 34% (MN) GRADE 4 SCIENCE: LATEST NC SCORE: 24% | PRIOR NC SCORE: N/A | CHANGE: N/A | NC RANK: Tied for 27th | US AVERAGE: 28% | TARGET SCORE: 32% | FIRST: 45% (MA) GRADE 8 READING: LATEST NC SCORE: 31% | PRIOR NC SCORE: N/A | CHANGE: N/A | NC RANK: Tied for 12th | US AVERAGE: 31% | TARGET SCORE: 34% | FIRST: 42% (CT,ME) GRADE 8 WRITING: LATEST NC SCORE: 27% | PRIOR NC SCORE: N/A | CHANGE: N/A | NC RANK: Tied for 6th | US AVERAGE: 27% | TARGET SCORE: 27% | FIRST: 44% (CT) GRADE 8 MATH: LATEST NC SCORE: 30% | PRIOR NC SCORE: 20% | CHANGE: ⇧ | NC RANK: 13th | US AVERAGE: 26% | TARGET SCORE: 32% | FIRST: 40% (MN) GRADE 8 SCIENCE: LATEST NC SCORE: 27% | PRIOR NC SCORE: 24% | CHANGE: ⇔ | NC RANK: 23rd | US AVERAGE: 30% | TARGET SCORE: 35% | FIRST: 46% (MT)
• Nine out of 10 NC students will score at or above grade level on End-of-Grade (EOG) and End-of-Course (EOC) examinations.	Percentage of students scoring at or above grade level on NC's EOG and EOC examinations	NC EOG: % OF STUDENTS IN GRADES 3-8 SCORING AT OR ABOVE LEVEL III / CHANGE (PRIOR NC SCORE IN PARENTHESES) Reading: 77% (75%) ⇧ | Mathematics: 82% (80%) ⇧ | Both: 72% (70%) ⇧ NC EOC: % SCORING AT OR ABOVE LEVEL III / CHANGE (PRIOR NC SCORE IN PARENTHESES) Algebra I: 76% (69%) ⇧ | Algebra II: 73% (63%) ⇧ | Geometry: 64% (60%) ⇧ | Physical Science: 60% (57%) ⇧ | Biology: 61% (58%) ⇧ Chemistry: 66% (62%) ⇧ | Physics: 74% (73%) ⇧ | ELPS: 70% (67%) ⇧ | English I: 68% (68%) ⇔ | US History: 51% (47%) ⇧
• NC will eliminate the minority achievement gap.	Gap in percent proficient on NAEP and percent at or above grade level on NC EOG and EOC examinations *	BLACK/WHITE GAP | HISPANIC/WHITE GAP | AMERICAN INDIAN/WHITE GAP (IN PERCENTAGE POINTS) NAEP: 30 | 24 | 19 EOG & EOC: 31 | 21 | 23
• Nine out of 10 North Carolina students will be promoted to the next grade having met state standards.	Percentage of students promoted having met state grade level standards in reading and mathematics	GRADE 5: LATEST NC SCORE: 92% | PRIOR NC SCORE: N/A | CHANGE: N/A
• NC will be 1st in the nation in the percentage of students taking advanced courses.	Percentage of students taking advanced courses in math and science	% OF 8TH GRADERS TAKING ALGEBRA: LATEST NC SCORE: 25% | PRIOR NC SCORE: 27% | CHANGE: ⇩ | NC RANK: 5th | US AVERAGE: 20% | TARGET SCORE: 53% | FIRST: 53% (UT) % OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TAKING UPPER LEVEL MATH COURSES: LATEST NC SCORE: 61% | PRIOR NC SCORE: 59% | CHANGE: ⇧ | NC RANK: 1st | US AVERAGE: 46% | TARGET SCORE: 61% | FIRST: 61% (NC) % OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS TAKING UPPER LEVEL SCIENCE COURSES: LATEST NC SCORE: 30% | PRIOR NC SCORE: 31% | CHANGE: ⇩ | NC RANK: Tied for 13th | US AVERAGE: 28% | TARGET SCORE: 42% | FIRST: 42% (MS)
• 95 percent of NC's students will finish high school.	Percentage of students completing high school or GED	LATEST NC SCORE: 86% | PRIOR NC SCORE: 85% | CHANGE: ⇔ | NC RANK: Tied for 33rd | US AVERAGE: 86% | TARGET SCORE: 95% | FIRST: 95% (ME,ND)

• NC will be one of the top 10 states in program completion rates for exceptional students.	Percentage of exceptional students age 14 or older who successfully complete their special education program	LATEST NC SCORE: 46%	PRIOR NC SCORE: 48%	CHANGE: ⬇	NC RANK: Tied for 22nd	US AVERAGE: 48%	TARGET SCORE: 53%	FIRST: 87% (TX)
• NC will be among the 10 states with the lowest high school dropout rate.	Percentage of teens age 16 to 19 who are high school dropouts *	LATEST NC SCORE: 11%	PRIOR NC SCORE: 12%	CHANGE: ⬌	NC RANK: Tied for 36th	US AVERAGE: 9%	TARGET SCORE: 7%	FIRST: 5% (HI,ND,WI)

EVERY GRADUATE READY FOR COLLEGE AND WORK

• Nine out of 10 NC students will pass a tough high school exit exam.	Percentage of students passing an exit examination	*Available Fall 2004.*						
• NC will be one of the top 10 states in SAT scores.	Average SAT scores and adjusted SAT scores for NC students	AVERAGE SAT SCORES:						
		LATEST NC SCORE: 992	PRIOR NC SCORE: 988	CHANGE: ⬆	NC RANK: Tied for 47th	US AVERAGE: 1020	TARGET SCORE: 1133	FIRST: 1196 (IA)
		SAT SCORES ADJUSTED FOR PARTICIPATION RATES:						
		LATEST NC SCORE: 1035	PRIOR NC SCORE: 1029	CHANGE: ⬆	NC RANK: 32nd	US AVERAGE: 1049	TARGET SCORE: 1080	FIRST: 1111 (IA)
• NC will be among the top 5 states in the number of Advanced Placement (AP) exams scored at or above level 3.	Number of AP exams scored at or above level 3 for every 1,000 11th and 12th graders	LATEST NC SCORE: 150	PRIOR NC SCORE: 135	CHANGE: ⬆	NC RANK: 11th	US AVERAGE: 121	TARGET SCORE: 195	FIRST: 416 (DC)
• NC will be one of the top 10 states in the percentage of 18-to-24 year olds attending college.	Percentage of 18-to-24 year olds enrolled in two- and four-year programs of higher education	LATEST NC SCORE: 31%	PRIOR NC SCORE: 27%	CHANGE: ⬌	NC RANK: Tied for 28th	US AVERAGE: 33%	TARGET SCORE: 36%	FIRST: 42% (CT,ND)
• Nine out of 10 NC students who complete a vocational course of study will be highly rated by their employer.	Percentage of vocational graduates ranked above average when compared to other new employees	LATEST NC SCORE: 72%	PRIOR NC SCORE: 71%	CHANGE: ⬆				

EVERY SCHOOL ACCOUNTABLE FOR STUDENT LEARNING

• NC's system of standards, assessments, and accountability will be consistently ranked among the best in the nation.	External evaluations of standards, assessments, and accountability systems	LATEST NC SCORE: B / 83%	PRIOR NC SCORE: B+ / 87%	CHANGE: ⬇	NC RANK: Tied for 16th	US AVERAGE: N/A	TARGET SCORE: B+ / 88%	FIRST: A / 98% (MD)
		(*Education Week* evaluates standards, assessments, and accountability systems.)						
		LATEST NC SCORE: B- / 2.8GPA	PRIOR NC SCORE: C / 2.0GPA	CHANGE: ⬆	NC RANK: Tied for 5th	US AVERAGE: C- / 1.72 GPA	TARGET SCORE: C+ / 2.4 GPA	FIRST: A- / 3.6 GPA (CA)
		(Fordham Foundation ratings are based on an assessment of state standards.)						
• Nine of 10 NC schools will be recognized as Schools of Excellence or Schools of Distinction by the ABCs program.	Number and percentage of schools receiving each ABCs designation		LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:			
		SCHOOLS OF EXCELLENCE	171 (8%)	73 (4%)	⬆			
		SCHOOLS OF DISTINCTION	640 (30%)	510 (24%)	⬆			
		LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS*	31 (1%)	45 (2%)	⬆			

FOR MORE INFORMATON

Information for the *First in America* Reports is derived from multiple national and state sources. The complete list of *Data Sources and Notes* is available on the *First in America* website — http://www.firstinamerica.northcarolina.edu

A copy of the *First in America Reports* may also be obtained by phone 919.843.8127, by email fia@northcarolina.edu, or by mail:

North Carolina Education Research Council
Post Office Box 2688
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27515-2688

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

LEGEND

* *On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.*

Latest NC Score: *This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the most recent data collection available. Most recent data collection dates range from 1993 to 2001.*

Prior NC Score: *This is the average score for North Carolina taken from the preceding data collection.*

Change: *Change arrows show North Carolina's progress from the last data collection to the most recent data collection.*

⬆ *North Carolina's score is significantly better.*

⬇ *North Carolina's score is significantly worse.*

⬌ *Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change is not significant.*

NC Rank: *North Carolina's rank among states for which data are available. States are ranked from best to worst.*

US Average: *This is the average score for the United States taken from the most recent data collection available.*

Target Score: *This is the score North Carolina currently needs to achieve to reach the First in America target.*

First: *The score and state abbreviation is listed for the state receiving the best reported score.*

EVERY CHILD READY TO LEARN

TARGETS | INDICATORS | SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK

Changes: ⇧ North Carolina's score was significantly better; / ⇩ North Carolina's score was significantly worse; / ⇔ Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant; /* On this indicator a lower score is better; a higher score is worse.

EVERY CHILD WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY CHILD CARE

- NC will provide high quality child care, encourage family support for children's learning, and facilitate access to health resources for all children.

Smart Start indicators (19 Pioneer Counties)
Child care improvements

CHILD-TO-TEACHER RATIOS:*

	LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
INFANTS	4-TO-1	4-TO-1	⇔
TODDLERS	6-TO-1	6-TO-1	⇔
PRE-SCHOOLERS	9-TO-1	9-TO-1	⇔

CHILD CARE TEACHERS WITH SOME COLLEGE OR COMMUNITY COLLEGE COURSEWORK:

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
77%	59%	⇧

Family support for children's learning

% OF FAMILIES WHO ENGAGED IN EDUCATIONALLY IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES WITH THEIR CHILD:

	LATEST NC SCORE:	US AVERAGE:
READ TO A CHILD	91%	90%
TOLD A STORY	79%	75%
TAUGHT LETTERS, WORDS, NUMBERS	82%	88%

Health resources provided

% OF CHILD CARE CENTERS PROVIDING HEALTH SCREENINGS:

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
74%	59%	⇧

Child care teachers' average salaries

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
$6.95/hr	$6.77/hr	⇧	Tied for 30th	$7.42/hr	$7.86/hr	$10.62/hr (DC)

Ratings of child care programs in NC

% OF LICENSED DAY CARE CENTERS RECEIVING EACH STAR RATING:

☆☆ 6% ☆☆☆ 52% ☆☆☆☆ 30% ☆☆☆☆☆ 12% TOTAL AT 3-5 STARS: 94%

EVERY PARENT A GOOD FIRST TEACHER

- NC will be one of the nation's top 10 states in home support for literacy

Home environment support for literacy

% OF 4TH GRADERS REPORTING PRESENCE OF LITERACY MATERIALS AT HOME:

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
67%	72%	⇩	Tied for 20th	67%	71%	75% (ND)

% OF 8TH GRADERS REPORTING PRESENCE OF LITERACY MATERIALS AT HOME:

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
81%	81%	⇔	Tied for 13th	78%	83%	86% (MN,ND,VT)

% OF 4TH GRADERS SPENDING 5 OR MORE HOURS WATCHING TV DAILY:*

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
25%	28%	⇧	Tied for 24th	25%	16%	12% (MN)

% OF 8TH GRADERS SPENDING 5 OR MORE HOURS WATCHING TV DAILY:*

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
23%	24%	⇔	Tied for 27th	19%	13%	9% (MT)

- NC will rank among the top 10 states in the percentage of working age adults continuing to pursue their education.

Percentage of 25-to-44 year olds currently enrolled in any post-secondary education

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
3%	3%	⇔	Tied for 35th	3%	5%	6% (DC,MD,NM,RI)

EVERY CHILD READY TO BEGIN SCHOOL

- NC kindergartners will arrive ready to succeed in school and NC schools will be ready to meet their needs.

NC kindergartners' readiness scores

	LATEST NC SCORE:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:
HEALTH STATUS	85%	83%	90%
SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	98	100	110
APPROACHES TOWARD LEARNING	81%	83%	90%
LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT	97	100	110
MATH DEVELOPMENT	95	100	110

AVERAGE KINDERGARTEN CLASS SIZE*	60	18
KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS WITH EARLY CHILDHOOD LICENSURE	5%	90%

SAFE, ORDERLY, AND CARING SCHOOLS

TARGETS | INDICATORS | SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK

*Changes: ⇧ North Carolina's score was significantly better. / ⇩ North Carolina's score was significantly worse. / ⇔ Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant. / * On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.*

EVERY SCHOOL FREE OF DRUGS, WEAPONS, AND DISRUPTION

- NC will be among the top 5 states in freedom from drugs, weapons, violence, and teacher victimization by students.

Incidence of drugs, weapons, and violence in NC's schools*

% OF STUDENTS OFFERED, SOLD, OR GIVEN AN ILLEGAL DRUG ON SCHOOL PROPERTY LAST YEAR:*

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
30%	29%	⇔	Tied for 9th	32%	24%	20% (MS)

% OF STUDENTS CARRYING A WEAPON ON SCHOOL PROPERTY DURING THE LAST 30 DAYS:*

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
9%	14%	⇧	Tied for 3rd	10%	8%	8% (HI,MS)

% OF STUDENTS THREATENED OR INJURED AT SCHOOL DURING THE LAST YEAR:*

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
8%	10%	⇔	Tied for 11th	8%	6%	5% (HI)

% OF STUDENTS INVOLVED IN A PHYSICAL FIGHT ON SCHOOL PROPERTY DURING THE LAST YEAR:*

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
12%	15%	⇔	Tied for 1st	16%	12%	12% (NC,ND)

% OF TEACHERS WHO REPORT BEING THREATENED OR ATTACKED IN THEIR SCHOOL:*

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
19%	N/A	N/A	Tied for 45th	15%	9%	8% (ND, SD)

EVERY SCHOOL WITH ADEQUATE FACILITIES AND MATERIALS

- Nine of 10 NC teachers will report that facilities, equipment, and materials are adequate for instructional purposes.

Percentage of teachers reporting that facilities, equipment, and materials are adequate for instructional purposes

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
48%	40%	⇧

- NC schools will rank among the top 10 states in access to technology.

Students per Internet-connected computer*

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
11	25	⇧	Tied for 45th	8	6	5 (AK,DE,NE, OH,SD,WY)

Percentage of schools where at least half of teachers use a computer daily for planning and/or teaching

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
76%	72%	⇧	Tied for 28th	76%	84%	92% (AK)

EVERY STUDENT KNOWN AND CARED FOR

- The average size of NC kindergarten through 3rd grade classes will not exceed 18 students.

Average size of classes in kindergarten through 3rd grade*

KINDERGARTEN:	1ST GRADE:	2ND GRADE:	3RD GRADE:	TARGET SCORE K-3:
20	20	20	21	18

- NC will be among the top 10 states in reducing chronic absenteeism.

Percentage of 8th graders missing 3 or more days of school during the last month*

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
18%	22%	⇧	Tied for 11th	20%	17%	15% (IN,ND)

- Nine of 10 parents will say that their child is known and cared about as an individual in school.

Percentage of parents who report that their child is known and cared about as an individual by his/her teachers and principal

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
85%	79%	⇧

EVERY FAMILY WELCOMED

- Nine of 10 families will say they feel welcomed and encouraged to participate in their children's schools.

Percentage of families who feel welcomed and encouraged to participate in their child's school

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
82%	80%	⇔

QUALITY TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

TARGETS | INDICATORS | SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK

*Changes: ⬆ North Carolina's score was significantly better. / ⬇ North Carolina's score was significantly worse. / ⬌ Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant. / * On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.*

EVERY TEACHER COMPETENT, CARING, AND QUALIFIED

- NC teachers will score at or above the national average on teacher examinations.

Average examination scores of NC teachers

PRAXIS CONTENT KNOWLEDGE EXAMINATIONS:

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	US AVERAGE:
171	167	⬆	172

PRAXIS PRINCIPLES OF LEARNING AND TEACHING EXAMINATION:

	LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	US AVERAGE:
GRADES K-6	175	174	⬆	174
GRADES 5-9	172	172	⬌	172
GRADES 7-12	176	175	⬆	176

- NC will be among the top 10 states in the percentage of teachers who are fully licensed.

Percentage of teachers meeting licensure requirements

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
93%	79%	⬆	Tied for 26th	92%	96%	99% (KS,WY)

- NC will be one of the top 10 states in the percentage of teachers teaching in their field.

Percentage of secondary teachers teaching in the field in which they are licensed

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
66%	68%	⬌	Tied for 22nd	63%	72%	81% (MN)

- Nine of 10 NC teachers will engage in high quality professional development.

Percentage of teachers who report that they have participated in high quality professional development

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
59%	57%	⬌

- NC will continue to lead the nation in the number of National Board Certified Teachers.

Number of teachers attaining National Board Certification

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
3660	1262	⬆	1st	N/A	3660	3660 (NC)

- NC will be one of the top 10 states in the percentage of teachers with master's degrees.

Percentage of teachers with master's degrees

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
36%	37%	⬌	40th	47%	56%	80% (CT)

- 95 percent of NC teachers will remain in their teaching position from one year to the next.

Percentage of teachers who remain in their teaching position from one year to the next

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
86%	87%	⬇

EVERY PRINCIPAL A LEADER

- NC principals will score at or above the national average on principal examinations.

Average examination scores of NC principals

SCHOOL LEADERS LICENSURE ASSESSMENT:

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	US AVERAGE:
177	177	⬌	176

- Nine of 10 teachers and parents will agree that their principal demonstrates characteristics of effective leadership.

Teacher and parent perceptions of their principal's leadership

	LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
TEACHERS	51%	48%	⬌
PARENTS	72%	74%	⬌

EVERY SCHOOL A GOOD PLACE TO WORK AND LEARN

- Nine of 10 teachers and administrators will say that their school is a good place to work and learn.

Teacher and administrator perceptions of their work environment

	LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
TEACHERS	30%	38%	⬇
PRINCIPALS	57%	57%	⬌

- NC schools will rank among the top 10 states in the percentage of the annual education expenditures allocated to instruction.

Percentage of annual education expenditures allocated to instruction

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
63%	63%	⬌	Tied for 11th	62%	64%	68% (NY)

84

- NC will rank in the top 10 states in teacher compensation.

Average salaries of NC's teachers

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
$41,167	$39,220	⬆	20th	$42,917	$47,523	$53,281 (NJ)

85

STRONG FAMILY, BUSINESS, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT

TARGETS	INDICATORS	SCORES, CHANGE, AND RANK

Changes: ⬆ North Carolina's score was significantly better. / ⬇ North Carolina's score was significantly worse. / ⬌ Interpret North Carolina's score with caution — change was not significant. / * On this indicator a lower score is better, a higher score is worse.

EVERY FAMILY INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILD'S LEARNING

Target: • Nine of 10 NC teachers will engage in activities that promote parental involvement.

Indicator: Percentage of teachers who actively promote parental involvement

	LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
OFFERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS TO VOLUNTEER	88%	90%	⬌
COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS	79%	70%	⬆

Target: • Nine of 10 parents will take steps to support their child's learning.

Indicator: Percentage of parents who actively support their child's learning at school and at home

	LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN THEIR CHILD'S SCHOOL	62%	64%	⬌
PARENTAL SUPPORT FOR THEIR CHILD'S LEARNING AT HOME	89%	90%	⬌

Target: • NC will be one of the nation's top 10 states in family support for homework.

Indicator: Percentage of students who discuss their studies at home daily

% OF 4TH GRADERS REPORTING THEY DISCUSSED STUDIES AT HOME DAILY:

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
58%	56%	⬌	Tied for 4th	52%	57%	61% (DC)

% OF 8TH GRADERS REPORTING THEY DISCUSSED STUDIES AT HOME DAILY:

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
42%	40%	⬌	Tied for 5th	38%	42%	45% (DC)

EVERY COMMUNITY INVOLVED IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Target: • Nine out of 10 parents will report that their employers offer opportunities for school involvement.

Indicator: Percentage of parents who report that their employer offers opportunities for school involvement

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
55%	40%	⬆

Target: • 40,000 mentors will be supporting children's learning in NC.

Indicator: Number of people serving as mentors

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
40,000+	21,500	⬆

EVERY CHILD WITH ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE

Target: • NC will be one of the top 10 states in child health and well-being.

Indicator: Child health indicator*

INFANT MORTALITY RATE:*

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
9.3	9.2	⬇	46th	7.2	6.3	4.4 (NH)

Indicator: Access to health care

% OF 2-YEAR OLD CHILDREN WITH IMMUNIZATIONS:

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
88%	82%	⬆	1st	78%	83%	88% (NC)

% OF CHILDREN WITH HEALTH INSURANCE:

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
90%	88%	⬆	Tied for 26th	88%	93%	98% (CT, RI)

Indicator: Child health behaviors*

% OF CHILDREN 12-17 HAVING 5 OR MORE ALCOHOLIC DRINKS IN A ROW DURING THE LAST MONTH:*

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
8%	8%	⬌	Tied for 5th	10%	9%	7% (DC, MD, UT, VA)

% OF CHILDREN 12-17 USING MARIJUANA IN THE LAST MONTH:*

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
7%	7%	⬌	Tied for 14th	7%	6%	5% (IA, KY, TN)

% OF CHILDREN 12-17 WHO CURRENTLY USE CIGARETTES*

LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:	NC RANK:	US AVERAGE:	TARGET SCORE:	FIRST:
19%	19%	⬌	Tied for 41st	15%	14%	9% (CA)

Indicator: Support for children's nutrition

	LATEST NC SCORE:	PRIOR NC SCORE:	CHANGE:
FREE AND REDUCED MEAL PARTICIPATION	86%	87%	⬇
SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM PARTICIPATION	9%	9%	⬌

BEST COPY AVAILABLE